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PUBLISHED TWICE MONTHLY

PLAY METER

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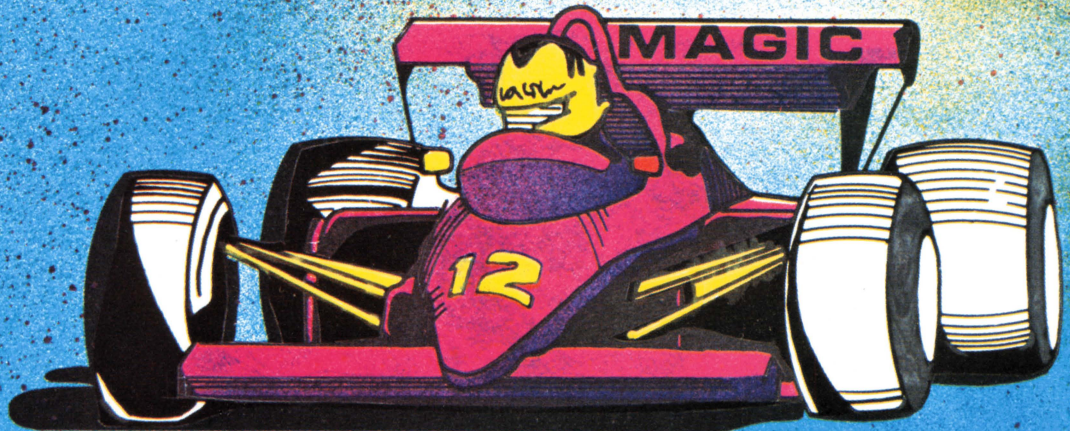
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Cover Design: by Margaret Vincent. If one can tell the future by examining the past, then this "Year in Review" Issue should serve as the industry's astrological guide to 1985 and thereafter.



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UP FRONT

NO WAY TO GO BUT UP

One day my son came home from kindergarten and said, "Mom, I have a new girlfriend. Patricia and I are in love."

Surprised at his use of the term, I asked how he knew he was in love.

"She told me," he replied matter-of-factly.

— Donna C. White, Readers' Digest, October, 1984

The industry has hit bottom. How do we know? *Everyone* told us so. No matter how good or how bad things are, you can always count on someone to say things are worse...and someone else to claim things are far far better. But this time, there was pretty much a consensus from all sides. Why?

Because the industry has hit bottom. Maybe because everyone has learned that operators are healthier than they've been in quite some time, or maybe it's because the manufacturers and distributors are finally listening to instead of talking at operators, or maybe it's simply because there's nowhere to go but up. Whatever the reason, there's more optimism in the coin-operated amusement industry than there's been in a long time.

Now that the industry has definitely hit bottom, operators know it's time to pick up the pieces of their businesses and get on with the future. For the past two years, manufacturers and distributors, madly scrambling to survive, have created a buying climate where operators would be insane to buy. And operators are a whole lot smarter than that. By nature, operators don't run their businesses based on what *might* come along. And manufacturers and distributors alike were constantly promising the future was only a game away. "Don't buy videos, laser games will be here tomorrow." "Don't buy laser games, videos are cheaper." "Don't buy videos, conversions for all the games will be available next week." "Don't buy conversions, pins are coming back!" Seems there's always something better coming along.

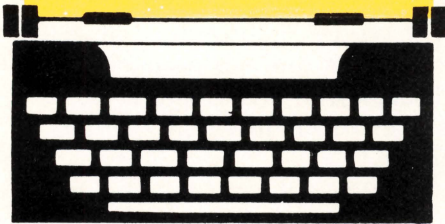
In an old Model T automobile manual, owners were informed, "There are so many improvements on the newest models that we foresee no new additions possible. Therefore, this manual should be complete for all automobile owners in the future." It sounds absurd now; but, at that time, the car manufacturer truly believed the best had come, and so did his buyers. Today, by contrast in the coin-op amusement industry, the industry feels the exact opposite—that the best product is still ahead of them and yet the future is somehow behind.

You see, the industry has indeed hit bottom, and that's why everyone has a more positive outlook for the future. There's no more looking over one's shoulder, half-expecting that, as soon as you buy, things will have changed making your buying decision a big mistake. Operators are getting back to the basics, and that means simply that they're thinking like they did in the old days. If they needed equipment, they went out and got the best equipment available to suit the location's needs. No longer does the operator feel forced to buy because of a competitor's mad scramble to have the latest hit game. Those dollars are still in the industry, and they're where they belong, in the operators' pockets. If he needs a new video game, he knows where he can get it. And if he needs a pinball, he knows where to get that, too. But, more importantly, if he needs to update his route with a new pool table or jukebox, he's not going to feel he can't because he's got to have some money left over in case tomorrow brings a must-buy video game. There are no more must-buy games out there, and that's why operators can finally get back to updating their routes sensibly.

Valerie Cognevich

Valerie Cognevich
Associate Editor

Letters to the editor . . .



Making money

As vendors, we've told locations, "Hang on till Spring." As summer came, we told them, "Hang on till Fall." Oh, yes, it's slow around July fourth. The firecrackers catch all the quarters.

I hear the same lines doled out in newsletters from manufacturers and distributors. The reason the laser didn't revitalize the industry is the 50-cent play. So now we vendors have to downgrade to 25 cents.

I compare the claims of the video manufacturers to that of the petroleum distributors. They want the station operators to drop *their* profit price to compete with other stations. Nothing is mentioned about higher utilities, labor, and taxes the station incurs. Nothing is

Something on your mind you want to vent? Got a gripe? Full of praise? Have a question? If you have comments on the coin operated entertainment industry, write to Play Meter. Our "Letters to the Editor" columns are dedicated to you, the operator/reader.

All letters must be signed; if requested, only initials will be used or the name withheld from print. Please include return address (although, for the sake of your privacy, addresses will not be printed.) All letters subject to standard editing. Be concise.

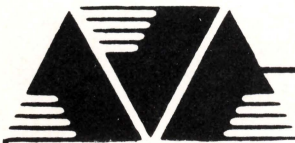
mentioned that they'll have to pay for this out of less profit if they drop their prices.

Let's take another look at our customer. He's the same one who said, "If cigarettes go to 40 cents, I'll quit." And that customer said the same thing at 50, 60, even 75 cents. And now cigarettes are \$1! Has he quit?

If gasoline goes up ten cents per gallon, will that customer quit driving?

I say make all your 25-cent videos into 50-cent videos. Then the lasers will get the same play, and the operator can make some real money off his other videos. What video market we have is hooked in the same way that what market the movie theaters have is hooked. And the movie theaters have no qualms about raising their ticket prices.

The way to stay in business is to make money, and the way to make money is to go to a national 50-cent



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video. The manufacturers can help by incorporating popular pin features—such as an extra man, a chance to win entire free games, or a chance to match features. And they can make kits to incorporate these bonuses also.

The 50-cent video will work.

Russ Morgan
Harrison, Arkansas

More high bull

The article by Charles Ross, "Alternatives for the Arcade Operator," (*Play Meter*, July 1, page 31) ignores the history of arcades and is way off base in its conclusions.

It is true that in today's market we must consider any and all changes, with no sacred cows. By settling, however, on "No Food, No Smoke, No Drink" rules as his primary target for changes, Ross has made a poor choice.

The High Tech/High Touch argument is an interesting one; but as applied to our business, it falls apart with the inaccurate statement that there is "...no High Touch...in the arcade..."

Ross then blames this purported lack of High Touch for the rebellion against arcades by parents and legislators.

The rebellion was actually born of the parents' and legislators' recollection of the arcades and pinball parlors of their own adolescent years. Without the very rules which Mr. Ross wants to abolish, these places were often smoke-filled hangouts.

Those recollections of the older generation were reinforced by the large numbers of new operators who entered the business in 1979, 1980, and 1981. The new guys were either unaware of, or uninterested in improving, the historically negative image of arcades.

In their ignorance, or in their quest for the fast buck, they had no rules and little supervision of their locations. The image which resulted confirmed the worst fears of parents and legislators and exacerbated the regulatory backlash.

The majority of operators who

survive today have done so in large part because they run clean operations *with* rules and supervision.

Those rules contribute to the key factors of a viable arcade business in today's climate: location, equipment quality, customer service, financial controls and good management.

The High Touch is important, but should be enhanced by elements such as people-oriented promotions and well-trained attendants schooled in customer relations and service. The polite enforcement of select rules can only contribute High Touch and are essential to the successful amusement center of today.

George P. McAuliffe
Regional Manager
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Fuss over foos

Our company purchased the registered trademark "Foosball" owned by a previous table soccer game manufacturer and distributor. This mark was registered in the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office in 1966 by Patterson International Inc. and has been actively in use since that time.

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We would appreciate it, when referring to the generic name of table soccer, that you refer to it by its proper Germanic spelling Fussball unless, of course, you are referring directly to our registered trademark, our company, and its product. For your reference, the U.S. Trademark Registration Number is 816922.

I thank you for your kind consideration in this matter and should you have further reason for inquiry, I may be contacted at the address herein.

Michael P. Dickinson
Import Distributors, Inc.
Seattle, Washington

NEWS

SAN DIEGO OPERATOR FILES ANTITRUST LAWSUIT AGAINST BALLY AND OTHERS

A distributor of video game equipment in southern California, Cameron Musical Industries, has filed an antitrust lawsuit against Bally Manufacturing Corp., one of its distributors, and others, alleging a group boycott by the defendants against Cameron. But a spokesman for the distributing company claims it has never refused to deal with Cameron; it simply has required Cameron to pay cash with order because of Cameron's poor credit history with the distributor.

The suit, filed August 16 at the U.S. District Court for the Southern District of California, named as defendants Bally Manufacturing Corp. of Chicago; C.A. Robinson & Co., a Los Angeles distributor of Bally equipment; Sons Amusement Company, an operating company owned by two of the principals of C.A. Robinson & Co.; and the principals of C.A. Robinson & Co. (Leah, Ira, and Sandy Bettelman, and the estate of the late Al Bettelman).

The plaintiff in the suit, Cameron

Musical Industries, is a New York corporation doing business in the San Diego area as Bordy Music Company.

The suit alleges that Bally has sought to monopolize the coin-op amusement equipment market nationwide by unlawfully excluding local dealers and distributors. The suit further contends that Bally's vertical absorption of its distributors, its refusal to deal with certain distributors and dealers, and its pricing on its equipment and repair

(continued on next page)

KONAMI BUYS INTERLOGIC

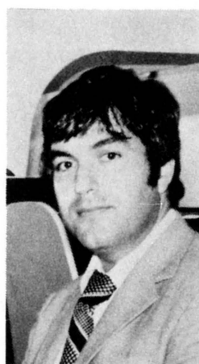
Konami Industry Co., Ltd., one of Japan's largest software manufacturers, has purchased Interlogic, Inc., a video game company based in Elk Grove, Illinois. Under the terms of the agreement, Konami will close its Torrance, California, office and relocate at the Elk Grove address of Interlogic.

The joint announcement was made by Kagemas Kozuki, president of Konami, and Ben Har-El, former owner and president of Interlogic. Har-El will assume the position of president of Konami; and Frank Bundra, former vice president at Interlogic, will continue in his capacity as vice president of Konami.

"To be afforded this opportunity is truly a great honor," said Har-El. "All of us here in Illinois are ex-



Kagemas Kozuki



Ben Har-El

tremely proud to become part of the Konami family and have committed ourselves to carry on the Konami tradition of excellence and quality.

Konami and Interlogic have a long-standing tradition in joint

ventures. Together, they have produced and marketed such conversion kits as *Mega Zone*, *Roc 'N Rope*, and *Pandora's Palace*. Konami has also produced on its own or had marketed by other video game firms such games as *Time Pilot*, *Gyruss*, and *Time Pilot '84*.

"Ken Ichiki has done a fantastic job in promoting the Konami name in the United States," Har-El continued. "The joining of our forces will have a tremendous impact on this industry. Consolidating the two separate entities and relocating in the heartland, Chicago, will enable us to continue to bring more and even better games to the market."

Konami recently exhibited its newest game, *Super Basketball*, at the AMOA Show in Chicago. ●

THE CALENDAR

November 15-17

1984 IAAPA Convention and Trade Show, Market Hall, Dallas, Texas. Contact IAAPA at 312/766-0881 for more information.

1985

January 17-21

Second annual Induferias Show, Valencia, Spain. For information, contact Induferias at Apartado 476, Valencia, Spain. Telephone: 364-00-11. Telex: 62435 Feria E.

March 1-3

Amusement Showcase International, Expocenter/Downtown, Chicago, Illinois. Telephone 312/771-3290.

March 4-7

AMOA Executive Development Program, The Center for Continuing Education, Notre Dame, Indiana. Telephone 312/654-2662

March 29-31

Amusement Operators Expo (AOE), New Orleans Convention Center (site of 1984 World's Fair), Flagship Hotel—Sheraton/New Orleans. Telephone: 504/488-7003.

NEWS

parts is exclusionary and unlawful.

The suit also contends Bally has violated the Racketeer Influenced and Corrupt Organizations Act of 1970 (RICO). According to the complaint, the RICO Act was violated by a pattern of unlawful acts that include "group boycott, discriminatory practices, predatory practices, and the unfair subsidy of competitors; and in an attempt to gain an unfair competitive advantage, monopoly, exclusionary acts, exclusive dealings, territorial restrictions, both vertically and horizontally, and fraud."

However, when contacted by *Play Meter*, Sandy Bettelman said his company has never stopped selling to Bordy and, in fact, is still selling to the company. Bettelman added that C.A. Robinson recently had to sue Bordy for debts the San Diego company had not paid.

"Bordy lost that suit," said Bettelman, "and they're now paying us for equipment that was purchased in the past. Even now we will sell to them, but we have put them on a C.O.D. basis because of their past history."

Joel Weinberg of Cameron did not want to talk about his company's current buying from C.A. Robinson, though he did admit his company was now paying C.A. Robinson for past debts as a result of the suit it lost.

Bordy also claims that Sons Amusement sold him a large route of Safeway stores and then, in a breach of a verbal contract, continued to compete in that area.

Bettelman, however, claimed Sons Amusement never agreed not to operate in the area. "We are both large corporations," Bettelman said, "and we would not have verbally agreed to things that did not appear in a written contract. It just wouldn't make any sense to do that."

He continued by adding, "Also, we do not solicit locations and still have the same ones we had before

they bought the route."

Bordy has also charged that C.A. Robinson has sold to Sons Amusement at a lower cost than it has to other operators, with the purpose of injuring competitors.

Bettelman also disclaimed this, saying that the contention was not based on any evidence at all since the only way Bordy could even base such a claim would be if it had access to C.A. Robinson's books.

"The fact is," said Bettelman, "we treat ourselves the same as other customers."

Bettelman also intimated that his companies may possibly file a countersuit. "We would do much better financially to settle this out of court," he said. "But the whole suit is so unfounded we just can't let them get out of it that easy."

Bettelman suggested that Bally must have been included in the lawsuit because of the industrywide rumor that Bally was going to take over C.A. Robinson.

"And that isn't even true," Bettelman said. "Otherwise, I can't see why other manufacturers were not included in the suit because we sell other lines of equipment."

Bettelman's reference was to another charge in the suit that Bally illegally designated C.A. Robinson as their distributor and would not sell direct to Bordy.

When asked why he was singling out Bally for this common practice of appointing regional distributors, Weinberg stated, "Other manufacturers may also be subject to this litigation."

He added, "This suit is definitely not the nickle and dime lawsuit Bally has said it was. I don't even want to make further comment except to say that C.A. Robinson is known for what they're known for, and this case will be fought in court to the end. I think they all know it is a substantial lawsuit because Bally hired the best lawyers in Chicago to fight this." ●

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What was the talk of the AMOA?

See the

January 1 issue
for the scoop.

Smithsonian to have coin-op display

Through the coordination efforts of AGMA, a presentation of coin-op equipment was made to the Smithsonian Institute in Washington D.C.

Nolan Bushnell donated *Pong*, Bally Midway donated *Pac-Man*, Cinematronics contributed a *Dragon's Lair*, Game Plan donated a *Sharpshooter II*, and Video Music International donated a *Star Time Video Jukebox*.

Each game represents a milestone in the history of the coin-op entertainment industry. Of course, *Pong* was the game that began it all, *Pac-Man* became the symbol of video games and their significant impact on the public, *Dragon's Lair* was the first laser disc game, *Sharpshooter II* encompasses the marriage of solid-state electronics to pinball,



Sharpshooter II



Dragon's Lair

and *Star Time* represents the video jukebox.

The Smithsonian is interested in making a permanent display outlining the history of the coin-op industry and is looking to increase its collection of games. They now have a 1930 Jennings pinball and a 1946 Wurlitzer jukebox.

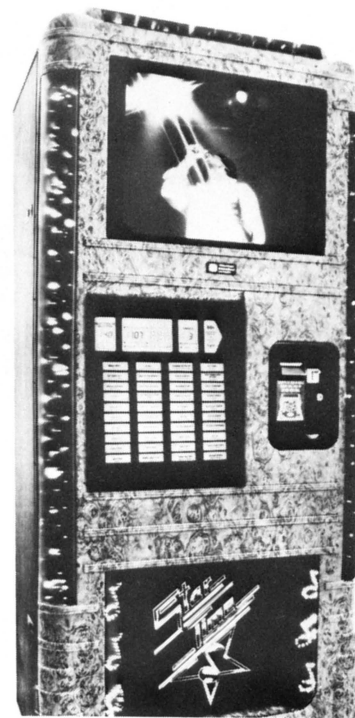
Lynn Pearson, AGMA director of communications, said, "This is something that all in the industry should be very proud of. This week (October 1) was declared High Tech week by Congress, and it was appropriate that we should make this presentation at this time. Anyone who has a piece of equipment they would be interested in donating, please contact me about it."

The Smithsonian is approached daily by people interested in donating things, but it is very selective and screens everything to make sure it is a viable piece of American history. For now, the games will be a part of the research department.

"We hope this is just the beginning of a long relationship with the Smithsonian," Pearson said.



Pac-Man



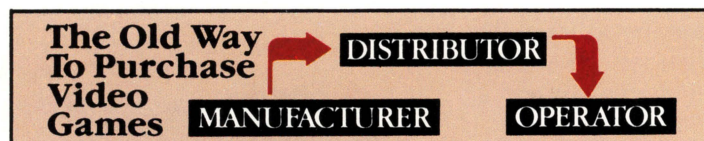
VMI's Video Jukebox

ATTENTION VIDEO

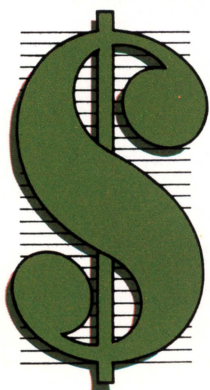
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smash hit of the recent JAMMA and AMOA shows. **Mikie[™]** is a fast paced, challenging, comical character game that will capture the hearts of just about anyone who has ever stepped foot inside a classroom. **Mikie[™]** is a player's game and it shows where



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TAKE ONE—TWICE MONTHLY



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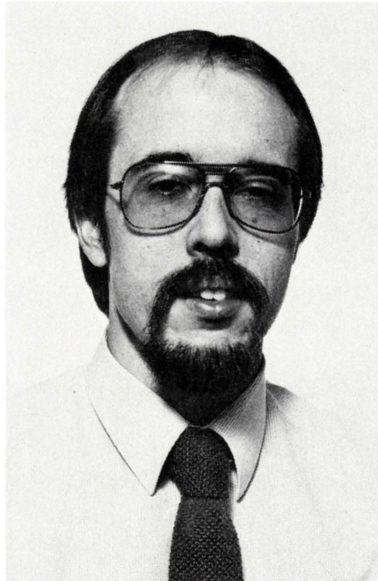
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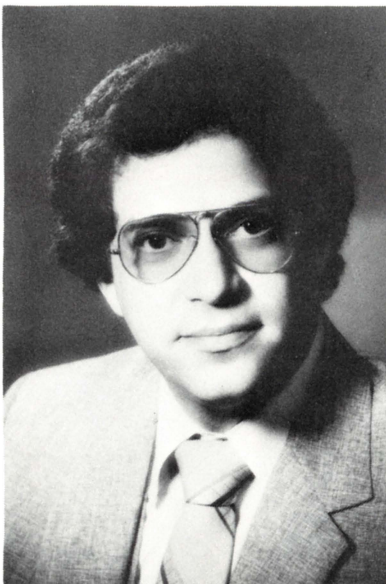
SNAPSHOTS

David Klimek has been promoted to manager of research and development at **Digital Controls, Inc.** As an electronic engineer for the past two years at DCI, Klimek has been involved in design and quality control, helping develop *Little Casino II*, *Little Casino III*, and the *Countercade* video game system.

"David will be the information source on all projects we are planning or working on in research and development," said Michael Pace, DCI vice president/engineering director. "Of particular importance will be his role as liason between our department and the DCI manufacturing division."



Marty Glazman has been named vice president of marketing for **Digital Controls, Inc.**, an Atlanta-based manufacturer of countertop video games. His responsibilities include world-

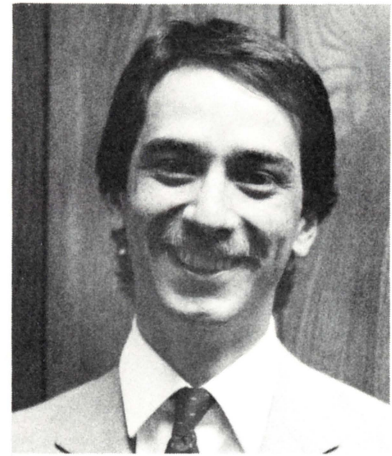


wide marketing of the firm's coin-operated amusement games and videodisc training hardware and software systems.

Glazman, 34, comes to Digital Controls with 12 years coin-op experience in management and executive positions that span all three major segments of the industry. Most recently, he has been serving as vice president of sales and marketing for Sente Technologies, and as a manufacturing consultant.

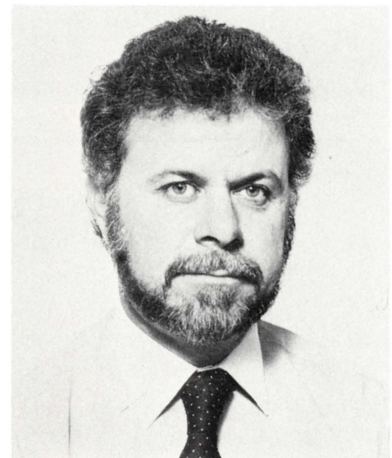
Glazman was with Williams Electronics from 1980-1983 as sales manager.

As an operator, Glazman managed a string of 15 arcades and an extensive street route in Chicago in the late 1970's. He will move to Atlanta from Chicago where he has resided for the last 15 years. He is married and has two children.



Richard S. Cardinale has been promoted to vice president/marketing at **Entertainment Enterprises**, a Lynbrook, New York game supplier.

"This is a newly created post," said Jed Forman, president of the firm. "The rapid acceptance and expansion of our product line made it obligatory for us to have a fulltime top-flight marketing administrator, and Richard fills the bill admirably."



Mike Shaw has been named director of public relations and communications for **Digital Controls**.

"We are particularly pleased to have Mike Shaw on our staff," said Mike Macke, chairman of the board of Digital Controls. "His understanding of the needs of the coin game operator and his dedication to the advancement of coin-op amusement are important to our goal of playing a leading role in ensuring success and strength in our industry."

GRAY AREA GAMES DECLARED ILLEGAL IN WISCONSIN

Gray area games have been declared illegal by Attorney General Bronson C. LaFollette of Wisconsin. The legal status of these games has been in doubt and in early September, LaFollette made his ruling to end the doubt of these games.

Previously, LaFollette's office made the statement that the games may not be illegal gambling machines *per se* and successful prosecution may depend on observed payouts on the games.

However, LaFollette stated that in light of more recent information on the games, these video gambling games are illegal and most are illegal *per se*.

LaFollette made the following

distinctions between illegal video gambling games and legal amusement games: Illegal games accept multiple coins where amusement devices usually accept only one coin; illegal games take only seconds to play where amusement games take some time; illegal games determine winners solely on chance where amusement games depend on skill; illegal games reward winners with points or games that are paid off in cash, amusement devices allow extra playing time or free games.

"They (gray area games) are not amusement devices," LaFollette said. "The amusement in video gambling comes from trying to beat the odds and win some money, and that is gambling."

LaFollette advised operators to have local law enforcement officers review the games they have to make sure they are legal.

According to Joe Phillips, executive director of the Wisconsin Amusement and Music Operators Association (WAMO), Merit's *Pit Boss* has already received a clean bill of health in Wisconsin. "There may be some others, but that is the only one that I know by brand name."

Phillips also said that WAMO has accumulated evidence to find out the extent of the proliferation of gray area games. "This is not a wide spread problem in Wisconsin," Phillips said. "However, there were some areas that had many of the games." ●

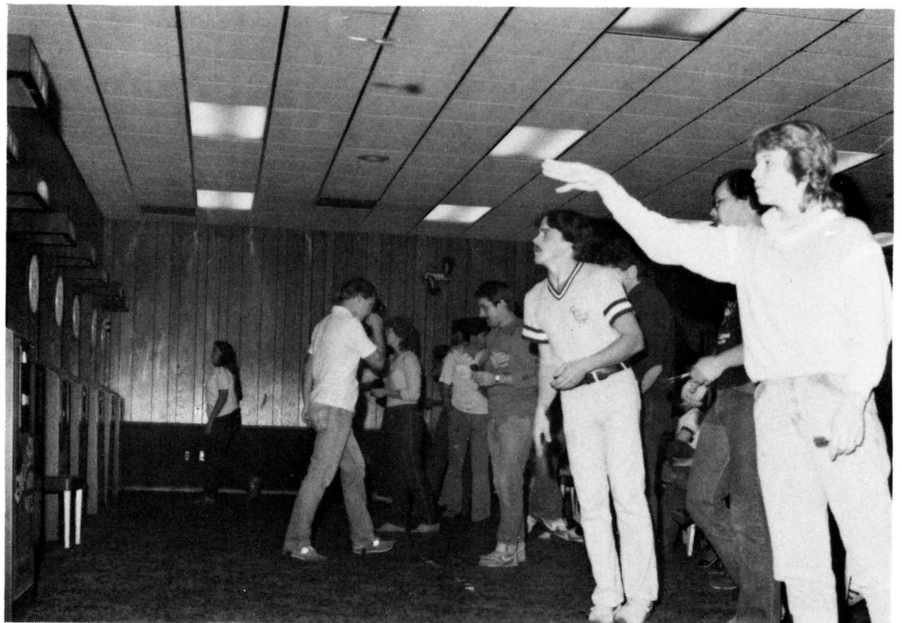
DART TOURNAMENT

TBI Games, an operating company in Rockford, Illinois hosted its Third Annual \$5,000 English Mark Darts Open September 29 and 30 at Tabala Towers in Rockford. Twenty brand new *English Mark Darts* games loaned from Arachnid Inc. were used in the 237-player tournament.

Sam Zammuto of Arachnid praised the effort, saying, "It was a very successful tournament with the best of the plastic-tipped players coming together. This league concept is guaranteed play for operators. If they put forth the effort, they will make money at it."

The tournament was the centerpiece competition in an area which has more than 1200 league players and 194 teams.

Lane Helgeson of St. Paul,



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NEWS

Minnesota won Most Valuable Player honors, shooting one six-dart-out and several seven-outs while on his way to winning four of the five events. Helgeson also shot the top Count-Up score of the tournament, a 1091, which paid a

\$10 prize. In all, Helgeson collected four first place checks totaling \$650, four trophies, and a wall plaque.

In the \$500 Open Singles event, Helgeson took the \$150 first place prize. Bill Pelisher from Green Bay, Wisconsin, won \$100 for second,

and Stan Wartman of Excecior, Minnesota, who traveled the farthest for this tourney, took third for a \$60 prize.

The Open Doubles prize package was \$1,000, and Helgeson and his partner Rick Brinkman of St. Paul, Minnesota, split the \$400 first prize in the event. The \$200 second place purse went to Craig Barlement and Gary Scanlan, both of Green Bay. Third place and a prize of \$100 was awarded to Sam Zammuto and Steve Johnson from Rockford, Illinois. Dale Person and Herb Healy of Rockford finished in fourth place, just out of the money, despite Person's two six-dart-outs in one match.

Nancy Swanson and Millie Smith from Rockford won the \$150 first place in the \$500 Womens Doubles. The Swanson-Smith team finished second in last year's TBI Open. The Fond Du Lac, Wisconsin, team of Geri Speers and Peggy Ann Feyen won \$100 for second place this year, and third went to Nadine Rocha and Olivia Cruz of Rockford.

\$1,000 was awarded in the Mixed Doubles event. Helgeson and Shirley Berg, both of St. Paul, Minnesota, took the \$400 first place. They had finished second in the event last year. Wayne and Judy Roewer from Crystal Lake, Wisconsin, were awarded \$200 for second this year, and Zammuto and Swanson finished third for a \$100 prize.

A new event this year, the \$1,200 Four-Person Team, provided the most exciting and competitive matches of the weekend. Helgeson and Brinkman teamed with Barlement and Scanlan to take the \$400 first place. Pat Weir, Tom McInnis, Mike Brawner, and Gene Swetlik, all of Green Bay, won \$250 for their second place showing. Third position paid \$150 to Spencer Pettigrew, Jim Dickison, Steve Johnson, and Dave Schultz, all of Rockford. ●



Nancy Swanson and Millie Smith accepting 1st place checks for Womens Doubles from Bob Hodges.



4-Person Team winners Gary Scanlan, Craig Barlement, Bob Hodges of TBI, Rick Brinkman, and Lane Helgeson.

KING KONG TOPPLED

The U.S. Court of Appeals for the Second Circuit has unanimously affirmed the dismissal of a "King Kong" trademark infringement suit brought by Universal City Studios, Inc. against Nintendo of America, Inc. and its parent corporation in Japan, Nintendo Co. Ltd.

One of the world's leading manufacturers of video games, Nintendo introduced *Donkey Kong* in July of 1981. It quickly achieved popularity in the arcades and became a lucrative licensing property in the United States of companies like Coleco and Atari. Universal, which claimed that it had succeeded to all trademark rights to the "King Kong" name, character, and story, sued, arguing that *Donkey Kong* violated its alleged rights.

The District Court denied the claim, granting summary judgment for Nintendo, and holding, not only that *Donkey Kong* could not be an infringement of "King Kong," but that Universal could not claim trademark rights to "King Kong."

"King Kong" first appeared as a

book and magazine serial in 1932. The giant ape was raised to mythic status in the 1933 RKO movie starring Fay Wray. In his decision, the District Court judge described "King Kong" as "a ferocious gorilla in quest of a beautiful woman, who goes on rampages, chases people, crushes them under foot, or throws them to the ground, and fights with dinosaurs, giant snakes, airplanes and helicopters, all culminating in his tragic and bloody death."

The District Court contrasted this to the video arcade game *Donkey Kong* in which the gorilla uses such obstacles as "pies, cement tubs, birthday cakes and umbrellas," in an effort to thwart Mario the carpenter who, guided by the player, attempts to climb a structure of pink girders in his effort to reach the top of the screen and free the pig-tailed girl Pauline from the hands of the playful *Donkey Kong*.

In granting summary judgment and dismissing the complaint, the District Court found that "no reasonable jury could find likelihood of confusion," between the two char-

acters. The Appellate Court agreed, finding that the "two properties have nothing in common but a gorilla, captive woman, a mere rescuer and a building scenario," and that "the two characters are so different that no question of fact was presented on the likelihood of consumer confusion."

Howard Lincoln, senior vice president of Nintendo, Inc., said, "Nintendo is extremely pleased with the decision. We were astonished that Universal would claim any confusion between *Donkey Kong* and "King Kong," and we are, of course, gratified that our position has been vindicated. Nintendo will now pursue its counterclaims against Universal to recoup damages sustained as a result of Universal's actions."

The Appellate Court stated that because it affirmed the District Court's holding on the possibility of confusion, it did not need to, and did not decide, if the District Court was correct in finding that Universal had never acquired any trademark interest in "King Kong." ●

INDUSTRY VETERAN RALLIES TO 'DEAL ABBY' PLEA

Industry veteran Philip Roth of Roth Novelty Company in Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania, was recently singled out for praise in the nationally-syndicated column, "Dear Abby," for his coming to the aid of three disabled children in need of a jukebox.

A writer, identifying herself only as Gertrude B., wrote to the columnist, Abigail Van Buren, asking for assistance in a family problem. She said she was the mother of three disabled children who had enjoyed music from an old Wurlitzer jukebox which had recently broken

down and, unable to find the parts, wanted to know if any "Dear Abby" readers could help her.

One operating firm, H and G Amusement Company in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, was in the process of starting a collection at work in order to send a rebuilt jukebox to Gertrude B.'s children.

But Roth Novelty was even faster to respond. He offered the family the best rebuilt jukebox he had at no cost. Saying also that he had represented the Wurlitzer line for 25 years, he agreed to service the unit free of charge forever.

The columnist later talked with the family, which reported that they were overwhelmed by the generosity shown them.

"Now," wrote the columnist, "who says we're living in a cold, selfish society where people care only for themselves?"

She could also have asked if Ronnie Lamm and the other self-styled anti-coin-op vigilantes read the "Dear Abby" column; and, if they do, how does this coin-op generosity fit into their perception that the coin-op amusement industry is only out to harm children? ●

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NEWS

WICO TO DISTRIBUTE TAITO PARTS

WICO Corporation, a designer, manufacturer, and distributor of parts, supplies and accessories for the coin-operated machine industry, has been selected by Taito America Corporation of Elk Grove Village, Illinois for exclusive national parts distribution and board repair service for all Taito games.

According to Taito President Paul Moriarity, "We expect this arrangement to further improve the high level of after-sale support our customers have come to expect for Taito products. WICO was chosen because of its outstanding reputation with the distributors and operators across the country and its strong service capabilities."

Four months ago, WICO created its own board repair service at its Niles, Illinois headquarters to support sales of its *Champion Baseball I and II* and *Regulus* conversion kits.

WICO will be using the Taito phone number, 1/800/323-0666, for board service. Boards will be repaired at WICO's Niles location only.

They should be sent to WICO Corporation, 6400 West Gross Point Road, Niles, IL 60648. When ordering parts, operators should continue to use the WICO customer service number—1/800/323-0765.

Wico entered the coin-op game market in January 1984 with distribution of Century, Royal, and All-American Darts. The company introduced two in-house manufactured games—*Treasure Cove*, an electro-mechanical gun game and *Af-Tor*, a pinball game—at the October AMOA Show in Chicago.

Founded by Max Wiczer in 1940, WICO operates sales and distribution centers in Niles, Illinois (corporate headquarters), California, New Jersey, Georgia, Nevada and Texas. International offices are located in Taiwan and Japan.

WICO distribution centers are linked by an IBM on-line computer which provides immediate access to inventory levels, product data and delivery times. ●

GAME PLAN APPOINTS AUSTRALIAN DISTRIBUTOR

Game Plan Inc. of Addison, Illinois, has appointed Solid State Imports as an exclusive distributor for Australia.

Solid State Imports is located at 2-10 Point Street, P.O. Box 27, Pyrmont (Sydney) 2009, Telephone 660-8942, Tlx. Fine AA 24454.

In discussing the new exclusive distributor arrangement, Game Plan's Vice President of Marketing Hugh Gorman commented, "It is with a great deal of pleasure and pride that we expand our interna-

tional market exposure and coverage through this fine organization. Headed by Brian Cowan, this prominent and well-qualified distributing outlet will offer local operators in Australia the optimum in sales and service assistance."

"This company is staffed by well-experienced industry professionals," Gorman added. "Operators in Australia will find most beneficial the guidance and expertise provided by Solid State Imports." ●

SCHAFER MOVES TO V.P.



Alan R. Schafer has been appointed vice president of marketing of The Valley Company. Valley, the world's largest manufacturer of coin-operated pool tables, is based in Bay City, Michigan.

In his new position, Schafer will have responsibility for the marketing of the company's full line of both coin-operated and home-use

products. This includes the *Cougar* coin table, the *Tiger Cat* bumper pool coin table, the *Jaguar* home table, as well as Valley's line of American-made "Contender" and one- and two-piece cues.

His duties include market development, pricing, distributor supervision, advertising and sales promotion, and new product development.

Schafer, formerly vice president/finance and management for Valley, said "The challenge is exciting and so are the opportunities."

Said Chuck Milhem, president of the firm, "This new alignment in our executive staff is in keeping with Valley's program to maintain our position as the leader in the coin-operated pool table industry." "Alan Schafer has the right combination of fifteen years of experience with our products, plus a broad understanding of the industry and business in general. The coin-operated games business is changing rapidly, and we are moving ahead of the pace."

"Alan will be instrumental in

planning and implementing our strategy for the years ahead, both in our traditional pool table business and in new directions, as well," Milhem concluded.

A native of Bay City, Schafer is a graduate of Michigan State University, with a major in finance, and minors in marketing and management.

ROCK-OLA APPOINTMENTS

Rock-Ola Manufacturing has appointed two new distributorships to represent its product line.

Universal U.S.A. has been appointed to represent the Chicago manufacturer in the Portland, Oregon area. With its office at 10220 S.W. Nimbus, Suite K5, Universal U.S.A. will represent the full line of Rock-Ola products.

Representing the Rock-Ola phonograph line in western Canada is Pacific Vend. Pacific Vend has its office and showroom at 1618 S.E. Marine Drive, Vancouver, British Columbia. •

NINTENDO RANKED SEVENTH

The Japanese video game company, Nintendo, best known in the United States as the creator of *Donkey Kong*, has achieved a top ten ranking in a review of more than 1,600 publicly held Japanese companies.

In an article published by the *Japan Economic Journal*, August 24, 1984, Nintendo was ranked seventh, ahead of such companies as Nissan (Datsun), Honda, and Pioneer.

The evaluation is based on factors such as profitability, financial strength, and growth potential. The top ten companies were as follows: Kyosera, Fanuc, Toyota, Tokyo

Electron, Hitachi Maxell, TDK, Nintendo, Fuji Photo Film, Seven Eleven

of Japan, and Computer Service Corporation. •

SENTE APPOINTS GAME DESIGNER

Rich Adam has been named game designer for Bally Sente, a video game subsidiary that specializes in the creation of conversion systems for coin-operated arcade games.

As a game designer, Adam is responsible for the design, programming and management of

various Sente Arcade Computer (SAC) games and game conversion systems.

A former senior engineer at Atari, he worked on several video game projects including *Pipe Shoot*, *Missile Command*, and *Gravitar*.

He and his wife currently reside in the San Francisco Bay area. •

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1984— EVEN ORWELL COULDN'T PREDICT HOW BAD IT WAS

1984—the year of the crunch. Much worse than the devastation of 1983, the crash penetrated not only the operating sector but the distributing and manufacturing as well.

Laser games were loudly ushered in at the beginning of the year; but, within months, were quiet disappointments as the industry scrambled unsuccessfully to find its salvation. By default, conversions grew to capture a larger and larger percentage of total video game sales, as most dedicated video games could not even justify their asking price. But conversions hardly proved to be the answer the industry was looking for either, for video revenues continue to decline.

Soaring costs and short life spans forced operators to rethink their positions on other equipment types that had been relegated to the alternative equipment category. Jukeboxes, pinballs, pool tables—as well as other alternatives like kiddie rides, foosballs, shuffle alleys, and electronic darts—started to draw

more attention if not more purchasing activity. And operators even showed an attraction to a new coin-op equipment type that wasn't even in the amusement category—pay telephones.

With the spread of illegal video poker games paving the way for video lotteries—the gray area games controversy reached a new dimension. And the creation of an ASI show by the manufacturers' association to compete directly against the five-year-old AOE show raised anti-trust questions about the manufacturers' association and so embroiled the industry in new controversy that attendance at any springtime show was greatly diluted.

State of the Industry

Gross collections for the industry were nearly halved from the industry's earnings of just two years ago. According to this year's State of the Industry report, industry collections were at \$4.5 billion. In 1982, it was gauged at \$8.9 billion. The

drastic decline reflected, of course, how video game collections had done, averaging a mere \$53 per week in 1984 compared to \$140 per week in 1981. As a result, the number of arcade locations dropped accordingly. And new equipment purchases plummeted from over 500 million two years ago to only 149,000 this year. And total equipment sales of all types including videos was just over 260,000.

AOE vs. ASI

AGMA, the Amusement and Games Manufacturers Association, held its first ASI show only three weeks before the firmly established and highly successful fifth annual AOE show. When AOE first began, some manufacturers scoffed claiming two shows (the other being 35 year old AMOA) in one year were not needed. However, AOE became a success drawing 8,000 plus attendance in its most successful year, 1983.

The ASI turned out to be a



The manufacturers' ASI Show (left) cut the industry in half, diluting attendance at both the ASI and AOE (right) springtime shows.

manufacturer and distributor show. Manufacturers claimed they were pleased that they could spend more time with *their* customers, the distributors. However, distributors said they would like to have had their customers there also.

The AOE, on the other hand, was an operators show attended by only several major manufacturers and a scant handful of distributors. This brought irate comments from operators about why distributors didn't come.

Representatives of AOE and ASI met during the summer to reach a fair compromise. Though an agreement was reached in principal, contract disagreements ended with no compromise leaving the future of both shows seriously in question.

Shake-Out hits distributors

Atari opened its first and only distributorship in Chicago and, before year's end, closed it. When the office opened, officials said it was "to get closer to our ultimate customer...this will also give us buying power for (our) arcades as well as help us dispose of used equipment." However, there was a dispute with Bally when Bally refused to let them handle its equipment even though Bally distributors had been handling the Atari line. When the office shut down, a company spokesman said, "We felt like one distributorship didn't give us an impact on the industry."

Circle International and Continental Divide distributorships, owned by MorTronics saw drastic changes made. Because of tremendous losses, MorTronics entered into a management contract with Southgate Enterprises, a company it had tried previously to buy. MorTronics successful at operating fast food restaurants, wanted an outside opinion on why the coin-op divisions were suffering substantial losses; and MorTronics, not involved in daily activities of the coin-op industry or its coin-op divisions, was at a loss to explain why. All branch offices of Circle and Continental Divide were closed except the Los Angeles office of Circle and the Denver office of Continental Divide, and MorTronics wound up



Distributors felt the crunch as video games sales plummeted. Branch offices (like the one pictured above) were abandoned in attempts to cut losses.

filing suit against the former owner of Circle, Dean McMurdie, for misrepresentations upon which MorTronics relied on in purchasing Circle in October 1982.

Philip Moss & Company, with offices in Des Moines, Omaha, and Kansas City, sold its assets to Rowe which increased its number of distributorships to 20 with the purchase.

Sanders Distributing, a 40-year old family-owned firm, went out of business. "Those videos just killed us," said an employee who had worked there since its inception.

Bally increased its number of distributorships with the purchase of 67-year old family-owned Banner Specialty Company, the oldest distributorship in the United States operating under the same name and ownership. Al Rodstein, president of Banner, said, "The Bally relationship provides us with greater strength to serve our customers."

Shake-Out hits manufacturers

As distributorships closed branches, sold out, or simply closed their doors manufacturers were feeling the crunch too.

Cinematronics, operating under Chapter 11 of the Bankruptcy code, was unable to pay off debts even with the success of *Dragon's Lair*. The company introduced a kit for *Dragon's Lair* but met less than rave reviews, and is still in Chapter 11.

Stern Electronics filed for Chapter 11 because of debts accumulated during more lucrative years. Stern, formed in 1976 as a pinball manufacturer, jumped to cash in on the laser market with several laser disc games, none of which were well-received.

Williams was also hit hard. The company entered into negotiations with Bally for possible sale, but the deal never materialized. Despite hotel and casino holdings, revenues continued to decline. Williams introduced an unfinished laser *Star Rider* at the AMOA show last year. When it was shown complete at AOE, lasers were already suffering, and it disappointed buyers. Williams' future is still uncertain and plans to open after its usual summer rest are not assured.

Atari revenues plummeted 64 percent the third quarter of 1983, and plans to move and consolidate manufacturing facilities to El Paso did materialize. With rumors running rampant about its future, Warner Communications made a deal to sell the home computer and video game division. The buyer was not interested in the coin-op division, and it continues under Warner. The company has consolidated and plans to return to the Borregas Avenue, Sunnyvale offices it moved out of to go to Milpitas. Whether Atari will eventually be shut down or sold is still in question.

One of the most shocking news events came when Mylstar closed up shop. Earlier in the year, the company had changed its name from D. Gottlieb & Company. The name echoing more than a half century of industry recognition no longer seemed valid to the new owners (Columbia which is owned by Coca Cola). Their announcing the name change, the company said it was "preparing for a future even brighter and more innovative than our past." However, less than a year later, Mylstar (still Gottlieb to many) closed, emphasizing the dire straits of many manufacturers.

Taito also made news when they announced they would consolidate operations. Taito America President Paul Moriarity, in explaining the necessity of the move, perhaps summed up the state of most manufacturers when he said, "The video game business has no need for the production capability now available. To think that factories designed to build (up to) 1,000 games per day can be profitable in this market is

just unrealistic." In adapting to the present, Taito has announced plans to introduce a pinball machine.

Early this year, Nolan Bushnell promised to make another mark in the industry like he did when he founded Atari and invented *Pong*. His new company, Sente, named for the same Japanese game where the name Atari was derived, was supposed to conjure up the only play that could beat Atari. But it brought forth much less than what was hoped for. The Sente System and first game *Snake Pit* required up front money from distributors, but no winner ever materialized. Instead, a Pizza Time official admitted the advance money was used to cover Pizza Time debts.

Soon after, Bushnell's Pizza Time Theatre filed for Chapter 11 and Sente sold out to Bally with Bushnell going along with the deal. Bally claimed they would assume no liabilities to Sente Distributors. And Bally/Sente called distributors together once again to outline plans for the future of a system that would

promise more good games.

Several other manufacturers found themselves facing bankruptcy. Tuni Electro Service was taken over by Enter-Tech and Century Electronics of England, manufacturers of the convertible video system, was also forced to close.

On the brighter side, Nintendo introduced its VS. System that has continued to be a success with each new Nintendo Pak, and *Punch Out!!*, one game, still ranks high on the charts.

Centuri introduced *Track & Field* amidst laser games and found a winner on its hands as lasers failed to make a good impression.

Some other manufacturers seem to have bright futures. Data East, though *Bega's Battle* was often referred to as *Bega's "Boo Boo,"* have come back with a strong piece in *Karate Champ*. Their company's *Cobra Command* kit for *Bega's Battle* had higher ratings than *Bega's Battle*. Steve Hochman of Crown Vending, an operator, introduced *Superbike*, a kit, and it made



The long-awaited return of the video guru, Nolan Bushnell, was just another in the long line of great expectations that went sour. His new company, Sente, fizzled out of the box.

the National Play Meter on numerous occasions.

Malcolm Kauffman made a statement at the NCMI that the major manufacturers of tomorrow do not exist today and operators may get into the manufacturing business. He just may have something there.

Laser games

Laser games, once promising to bring life back into the industry, did not live up to expectations. As *Dragon's Lair* (the first laser on the market) proved lasers could be big winners, almost every known manufacturer was rushing to have its laser introduced. About 18 lasers hit the market and it wasn't long before high cost and severe maintenance problems were giving everyone second thoughts. As early as March, games that carried price tags up to \$5000 were going for half price and even then slowly. Chuck Farmer, of Bally Distributing said, "There's not

a distributor who's not trying to dump his laser inventories."

Operators found that replacing a single disc player cost as much or more than a conversion kit and vowed it wasn't worth it.

Conversion kits

Conversion kits remained the focal point of new purchases. Though many manufacturers belittled conversions labeling them as only a short term solution, most began offering kits. Williams brought two kits to AOE, Atari introduced *Pole Position II*, Bally offered kits, and kits were plentiful from Universal (*Mr. Do!* fame, the top selling conversion to date), and from smaller manufacturers such as the popular *Superbike* from Crown Vending, and several from Magic Conversions offered with money back guarantees.

However, though operators were willing to take chances on low

cost kits, the cost of some topped what a dedicated game cost several years ago. For example, *Pole Position II* topped \$1,100.

In early 1984 conversion kit sales peaked, leading some to believe the kit market would be less bright. Data East's Tom Petit said in June, "The kit market is a dwindling market...(the marketplace) is going to shift to competitively priced uprights. We're putting our emphasis on aggressively priced uprights."

Nintendo's Bill Cravens estimated that about 75 percent of all video sales were conversions at the peak and that kits would settle into the industry at about 50 percent of all video sales.

Nintendo's VS. System was an overwhelming hit for two reasons—good games and low price. Nintendo wanted operators to look on the system as an ongoing thing they could build libraries of games veering from the standard of keeping a game on location until all life was gone. Nintendo offered distributors no close outs and guaranteed that any cost reduction would be retroactive.

Some industry members feel systems may be the future of the industry. The Sente system got off to a bad start but company officials are promising better games, obviously the only way any system could be successful.

Alternatives

Back to basics described many philosophies this year. The pool tables, jukeboxes, pinballs, and shuffles, having taken a back seat since the video mania years, were being brought up on the list of priorities. Operators realized the \$60 per week pool table with a viable life expectancy of seven years looked more promising than almost any video game.

More operators took advantage of Valley's pool league program to promote pool play and win back location owned tables. Eleven percent of operators responding to *Play Meter's* annual survey said they participated in leagues and 83 percent of those said their collections had increased because of it.

Jukeboxes were gaining atten-



Video jukeboxes, spurred by the popularity of music videos, suddenly attracted the eyes of the industry.

tion. Ed Blankenbeckler, new owner of Seeburg said, "If jukeboxes have been in hibernation, watch out because the bear is waking up." Blankenbeckler obviously is sincere in his statement since he is resurrecting Seeburg. Rock-Ola, which tried its hand at video games is once again devoting itself to its impressive line of phonographs.

And Rowe introduced its first video jukebox. Ed Wiler of Rowe said, "This is the right generation, and we have the right machine."

"It's the up and coming thing," said Len Schneller of U.S. Billiards whose company also has a video sound system.

The AMOA continued its battle with the performing rights societies. A petition run in *Play Meter* brought in excess of 28,000 signatures in protest of the increasing royalty fees. A bill suggesting a \$50 one time fee on jukeboxes is still pending, and AMOA has attended meetings in Washington, but no decision is scheduled for the near future.

And America renewed its love affair with flippers. The industry began buying pins once again. Some claimed pinball revenues only looked good in comparison to sagging video revenues, but it was more than that, pinball is making a comeback. A new group of kids who were teething on video games look at a pinball as something new. Surprisingly, not just new pins are attracting attention, but used pins are also in demand. An auctioneer said they "can't get enough pins." A distributor said, "We have been benefitting most from the tremendous demand for used pinballs." Even the new pins are taking on familiar characteristics reminiscent of the pins before the video boom. The multi-everything pins were competing with video, and they needed all the gimmicks they could come up with. Now pins are pins and are increasing in demand.

Other alternative equipment such as foosball, shuffle alleys, and darts also drew more attention. Dart leagues are gaining in popularity bringing in more new players.

Private pay phones should soon prove to be a viable alternative piece



Operators started checking into alternative pieces of equipment—even non-amusement devices like private pay telephones. Deregulation helped pave the way.

of equipment for operators. Minnesota led the way when several pay phone manufacturers sued Northwestern Bell for the right to place their phones. The FCC approved allowing private phones to be licensed and given a registration number. However, the FCC ruling only affects long distance calls and each state will still be required to make its own ruling on local calls like Minnesota has. Other states were looking at Minnesota and its outcome before making rulings however, about ten more states are expected to rule private pay phones legal for long distance and local calls.

Gray areas

Gray area games continued to be a major industry issue. The National Coin Machine Institute (NCMI) became the only major association to take a strong stand in opposition to the illegal operation of gray area games. The Florida Amusement/Vending Association (FAVA) also issued a statement against gray area games that said, "...we as an association oppose games of chance that offer rewards for anything other than skill." Games were seized in many states and several states made rulings making the games illegal.

Just last month (October) the U.S. Senate Permanent Subcommittee held hearings to find out the extent of the problem. Live testimony and statements were heard

from an FBI investigator, Bill Holmes; a location owner, Roger Baldwin; a district attorney in Tennessee, Clayburn Peoples; NCMI, Herb Beitel; commissioner of the department of consumer affairs in New York, Angelo Aponte; Steve Hochman and Millie McCarthy of New York State Coin Machine Association; and several Baltimore prosecutors. Senator William Roth delivered the opening statement on how high technology has moved into illegal gambling. He called the gray area machines, "Slot machines in sheep's clothing." He called money derived from these machines as "underground economy because the millions of dollars in profits go untaxed, which is a major drain on the economy at the expense of our law abiding citizens.

FBI agent Holmes gave a history of gambling saying that as early as 1902, plays and diversions were incorporated into the design of slot machines to disguise its true purpose, gambling. He demonstrated four gray area games pointing out ways they skirt the gambling laws.

The hearings also briefly discussed lotteries. Herb Beitel of NCMI summed up by saying, "The surge of state sanctioned lotteries and the proliferation of gaming activities under the banner of lotteries is indirectly moving the states into the gambling business as a purported monopoly.

The CBS TV program, "60 Minutes," devoted a segment called "From Pac-Man to Poker-Man" heightening awareness and intensifying activities of law enforcement agencies. It focused on bar owners and law enforcement officials in New York and Tennessee, painting a picture of corruption, extortion, and organized crime surrounding a \$2 billion illegal gambling industry. A New York state liquor authority undercover agent estimated 30,000 machines produced a \$.75 billion take annually. A Tennessee district attorney claimed his rural territory of 113,000 residents produced more than \$7 million in video poker gambling money.

Ironically, though many operators have said gray area games have kept them in business, video lot-



It's was almost an industrywide consensus—video lotteries posed a threat to operators nationwide.

teries have threatened to put them out of business. A publisher of a gaming newsletter said the ground work for video lotteries was laid by the illegal operation of poker machines. Nebraska led the way when a video lottery was allowed in the state. However, in a unanimous vote less than a year later, video lottery machines were ordered out of locations by January 1, 1985. The Coin Operated Industries of Nebraska (COIN) opposed the video

lottery. Ted Nichols, president of COIN sat on several panel discussions over the year explaining the effect of the machines. The games "take millions out of the economy and produce nothing."

Bally drew severe criticism when it gave the state of Illinois \$1.5 million to locate and test 300 video lottery machines during a six month period, promising \$7 million in profits. Bally provided the games free with no guarantees that Bally

would be awarded the contract should the test be successful.

The Illinois Coin Machines Operators Association (ICMOA) activated a vigorous campaign to stop video lottery gambling in Illinois. Alex McConnell, president of ICMOA said, "The coin-op industry has never before faced anything with the awesome potential to wreck our business as does the video lottery machines."

The test began in Illinois in August, but by October all 300 test machines were still not placed. Dock Ringo of AMOA said, "The problem may just solve itself if the test fails."

AMOA took an official stand against video lotteries. At the time, officials stressed that gray area games, which AMOA never made an official statement for or against, and video lotteries, "...are two entirely different problems."

NCMI has been at the forefront of the problem since the beginning. Herb Beitel of NCMI participated in and organized numerous seminars and panel discussions voicing NCMI's concern about the devastating potential of video lotteries. And the position of *Play Meter* magazine has remained unchanged condemning the operation of gray area games as well as the devastating potential of video lotteries. •



So-called "gray area" games received increasing governmental and media attention, and painted a picture of corruption in the coin-op business.

Guide to *Play Meter* 1984

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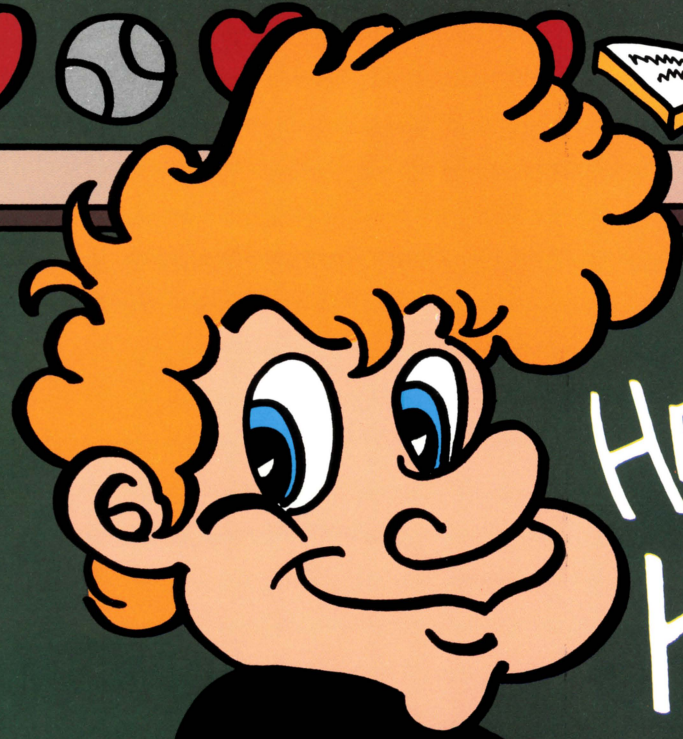
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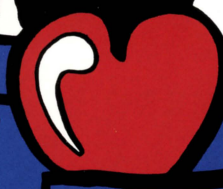
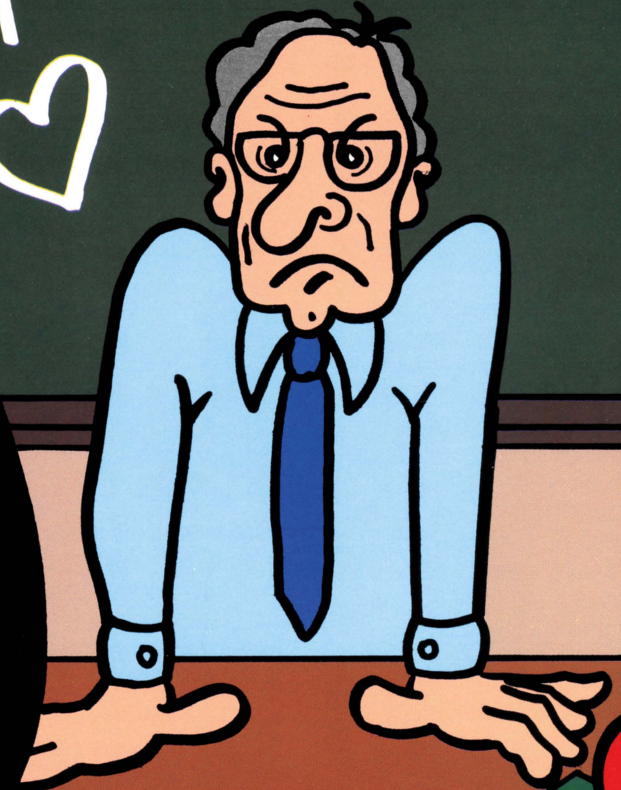


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HIGH SCHOOL GRAFFITI

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But He'll Put Cash Back Into Your Coin Box.

Mikie™, *High School Graffiti*, is a fast paced, challenging comical character game that will capture the hearts of just about anyone who has ever stepped foot inside a classroom.

Mikie is just your average high school boy who happens to run into a little difficulty every time he tries to get together with his girlfriend.

start hurling pies at our high school hero.



Poor Mikie finally encounters his beloved in the gym, only to find that the girls' gym teacher is not pleased with the intrusion.



Hand in hand our loving couple make it to the courtyard where they must sidestep several football players to make it to Mikie's awaiting car ... ah, all this in the name of love.



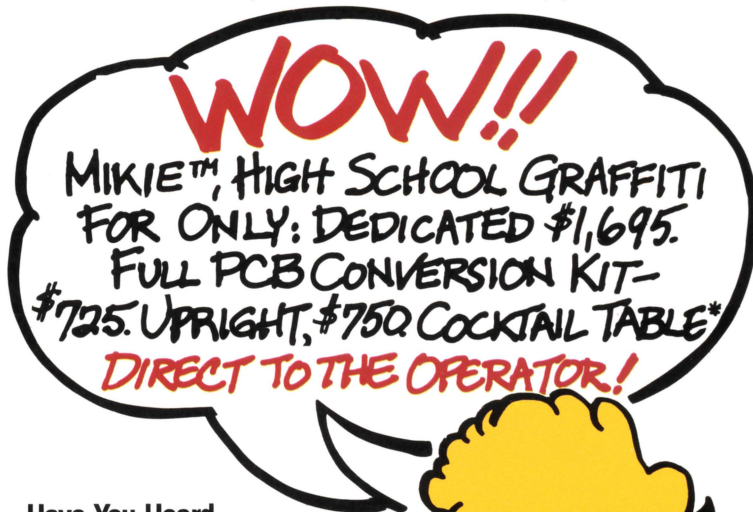
It starts in the classroom where Mikie tries to collect messages (hearts) from his sweetheart. You see, Mikie, with the use of his HIP ZAP, has to push the other students off their chairs to get those messages. This, as you can imagine, doesn't sit too well with his teacher. Things aren't much easier for Mikie once he makes it out of the classroom and into the locker room.



It gets downright messy in the cafeteria when the cooks

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HIGH SCHOOL GRAFFITI

Mikie™

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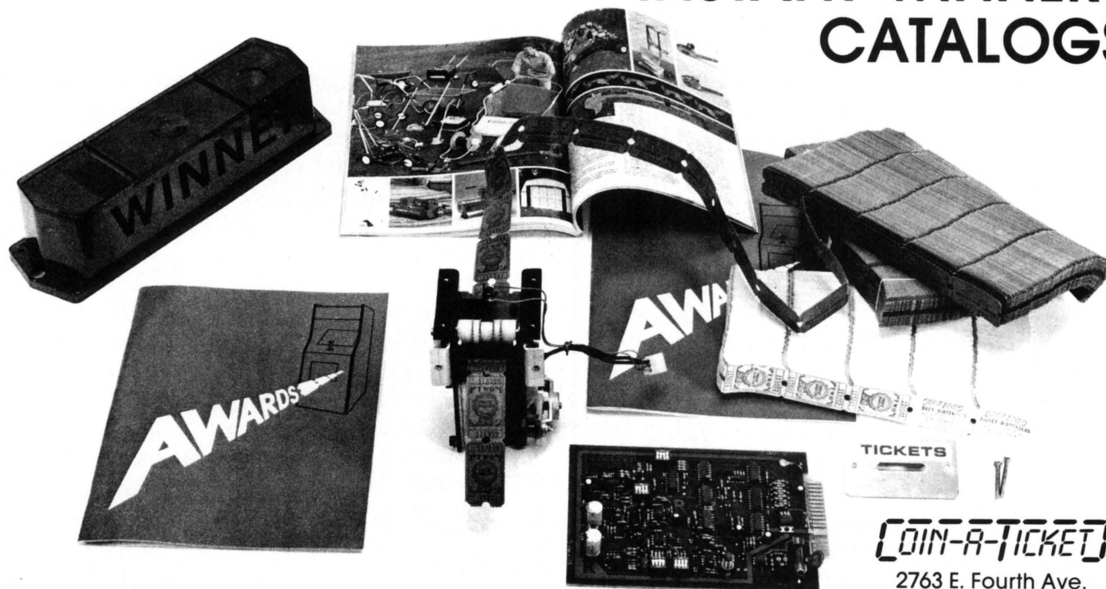
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1984— Every Which Way But Up

By Roger C. Sharpe

For those in the field who had thought they had seen everything, 1984 must have been an eye-opening 12 months of surprises and disappointments. Devastation ruled the day in a never-ending drama of confrontation and economic survival.

It proved to be the sternest test the coin-op industry has faced since those unparalleled days leading up to 1941, when public sentiment sent the business reeling to previously unthought of lows and a general belief that maybe the game was finally over.

Well, this was far from the case when the industry slowly started to regroup and rebuild in the mid- to late-'40s. The casualties were staggering as once-major factories closed their doors and faded from view, unable to make the transition that was demanded in a suddenly redefined field. Those capable of seeing a brighter and prosperous future managed to approach operations in a more realistic fashion, never allowing blind ambition or impatience to take over and doom any slim chance that remained.

In many ways, 1984 stands as a similar crossroads which will be looked upon, in years to come, as a period when the industry was forced to reevaluate its position in the leisure time entertainment field. The uncertainty of where coin-op sees itself in the scheme of things, surfaced rather dramatically in the almost paradoxical nature of product development we witnessed. On the one hand were the noble attempts to tap into the available advanced technology via some less than inspired laser-based machines

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and the talk of simulators or environmental chambers. The other side of the coin, meanwhile, was fervently taken up in the safety of resurrecting classic themes and vintage equipment such as pinball machines, skee-balls, bowlers, updated electro-mechanical creations, arcade novelty games, and even kiddie rides, as well as specialty items.

This split the industry right down the middle and reduced equipment introductions. To assess the relative stability and health of the

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business, let's look at the equipment. A startling lack of truly exceptional and innovative machines (at least, to the degree we have come to expect each and every succeeding year) is immediately obvious. The high points in equipment introductions were few and far between, and their impact was negligible.

The equipment released during the calendar year offers a sweeping panorama of diverse philosophies and game design patterns among the individual companies that tends to reveal much about the health of given manufacturers and what we might expect from them in the months to come.

In video games, here's the Sharpe guage of the winners and losers of 1984.

At Atari, apart from some carry-over success of older games, the only real accomplishment was the mid-year introduction of *I, Robot* with its impressive 3-D raster video animation. However, the question remains, do graphic displays translate into good earnings? Can cosmetic effects alone attract and hold a loyal following?

Over at Bally Midway, there's reserved optimism. The impressive showing of *Spy Hunter*, which broke out of the pack of driving games, was a top performer through spring, summer, and fall and, even now, shows no appreciable signs of slowing down. A familiar theme with some added twists, this behind-the-wheel challenge combined the high speed maneuvering of a basic car race with the staple appeal of shoot and destroy play action.

Another noteworthy creation
(continued on page 49)

Did You Know . . .




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THE ECONOMICS OF

Automobile leasing has become a billion dollar industry, rapidly attracting prospective lessees. Never before have the deals been better, the conveniences more tempting, nor the variety of plans more plentiful.

Competition is keen in the leasing field, and leasing companies often run "teaser ads" for their 18-month and 24-month contracts. So you must be an astute shopper and compare prices to obtain the maximum services at minimal cost.

The crux of the question is a comparison of ownership factors versus leasing costs. By and large, the leasing industry emphasizes service and convenience. Actually, leasing costs are not materially cheaper or costlier than individual ownership, but there is the positive reduction of worries, frustrations, and record-keeping.

A primary consideration is depreciation. Starting from the time the automobile is driven off the showroom floor, depreciation becomes the single greatest factor consuming the value of asset. At a rate of 25 percent the first year, 15 percent the second year, and 10 percent the third, it is easy to see that an automobile could depreciate to half the purchase price in just three years. The cost of a 36-month lease may not be much more than the cost of buying a new car and trading it in after three years. Therefore, the lease may be a feasible option for those who purchase a car every two or three years and whose disposable income position is not overtaxed by perpetual lease payments which actually equate to car notes.

At this point a logical question might be how can a leasing com-

pany, with payroll costs, overhead expenses, and large advertising budgets lease an automobile at less cost to the lessee than if the lessee had bought his own car?

The answer is leasing firms buy cars for much lower prices than are available to the general public; they research to find the makes and models that give best performance and value and, because of specialized know-how, are able to get top-dollar when reselling cars. Also, they maintain their own repair shops and pay a fraction of the repair costs charged to the unknowing layman. Additionally, they reduce insurance costs by carrying a "fleet" basis coverage and take advantage of factory guarantees that are available to the public, but unused because of lack of knowledge as to their availability.

Basically a monetary advantage is gained if (a) your company owned (or employee owned) vehicles are driven at least 12,000 miles per year, and especially if they are driven in excess of 15,000 miles annually, (b) if their annual repairs and maintenance bills are above normal because of the manner in which the vehicles are handled or because of local climate or driving conditions, and (c) if the vehicles driven are used more for business than for pleasure.

The advocates of leasing cite a list of primary advantages which can be summarized as follows:

1. Leasing instead of purchasing leaves capital free for other purposes.
2. Cash is not tied up in fixed assets and is free for investment.
3. Such investments are a hedge against inflation and puts money to its best use.

LEASING VEHICLES

BY JOSEPH ARKIN, CPA, MBA

4. Automobiles purchased on time cause a mortgage to be filed in the County Clerk's Office, which, in some instances can impair a credit rating.

5. Persons and firms using automobiles for business purposes can get a tax deduction for the lease payments.

6. Bookkeeping chores are eliminated for the maintenance of depreciation schedules, upkeep costs, adjusted trade-in values, etc.

7. A cash saving is effected by the elimination of the need for paying license or inspection fees.

8. Time is saved in the procurement of license plates.

Probably the most salient feature in addition to those named above is that the lessor will pay (on full-maintenance contracts) all repair costs, even those where you are at fault. When the automobile is laid up for repairs, another automobile is furnished.

How much does leasing cost? In the classified and automotive sections of your local newspaper you can find a variety of prices quoted; but, basically, there are two types of lease—a closed-end lease and an open-end lease.

A closed-end lease is like an apartment lease. You agree to pay a certain amount for a number of months. This is also known as a "net lease," a "fixed lease," or a "walk-away lease." The open-end (finance lease or equity lease) is riskier. At the end of the lease, you may either buy the car or let the company sell it. If the car sells for more than the lessor originally estimated, you get the surplus. If it sells for less, you pay the difference (not more than three times the monthly payment). However, an open-end lease is

usually a little less expensive per month.

It is of interest that in 1979, 20 percent of all new cars in the U.S. were leased. That figure is projected to rise to 40 percent by 1989. Although most of the leased cars are for business and government use, most of the industry's growth is expected to come from the public sector.

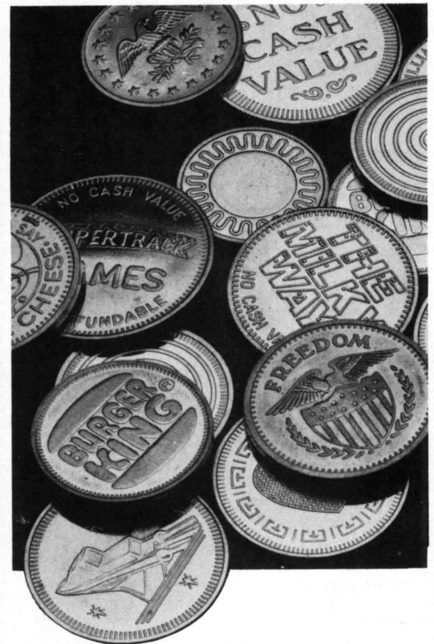
Leased automobiles can be obtained with full maintenance (the lessor will pay for all repairs, insurance, oil changes, license plates, winterizing, tire replacements, etc.) or without maintenance. In the situation without maintenance, you pay all of your own expenses and only lease the car itself. In either case, you pay for your own gasoline, tolls, and parking fees. Most leases will allow for 15,000-20,000 miles for annual usage, after which you must pay for additional miles driven as a surcharge.

Leasing is also the answer to the accident prone individual who cannot secure coverage because of a poor experience rating. This, coupled with the economic and service features previously mentioned, should give you the impetus to take a good look at auto leasing.

If all of the foregoing has sold you on leasing, the next question is from whom? The big factor is one that is often hidden from the casual inquirer—the quality of the service offered by the leasing company. Some companies have garages that give around-the-clock service, others close their service departments on holidays and weekends.

Before entering into any leasing arrangements, first check the company's reputation with your local Chamber of Commerce, the Better

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Business Bureau, or a local automobile club. As with many growth industries, the leasing field has been invaded by many marginal operators. Thus, it is also important to know some of the main points covered in the lease agreement.

Security deposit: You may be required to leave a refundable deposit equal to one or two monthly lease payments.

Advance payment: Most companies also require two months payment in advance. Be wary of companies that require a down payment because they are non-refundable and increase the cost of the lease by the amount of the down payment.

Fees and taxes: Your monthly payment will be subject to sales tax, and you will probably have to pay registration fees.

Insurance: You can probably get insurance through the company, sometimes at a lower rate than you could get on your own.

Damage and excessive wear: At the end of the lease, you will have to pay for any unusual wear, missing equipment, and unrepaired damage. Insist the lessor provide you with a specific description of the kinds of damage you'll have to pay for.

Term of the lease: Know how long your lease is—most leases to individual customers run 24 to 36 months.

Option to purchase: (Open-end lease only.) The lessor should specify the predicted wholesale value of the car at the end of the lease. You have the right to purchase the car at that price.

Early termination: The lease should state under what conditions the lease is terminated, such as default or if the car is totaled. Most lessors will allow early termination when someone is found to continue the lease.

Mileage surcharge: the normal range or base is 16,000-20,000. Make sure the mileage base is realistic and avoid leases with a surcharge of more than eight cents per mile.

Maintenance: Services and repairs are your responsibility unless you have a full-maintenance contract.

Basic monthly payments: This is based on the lessor's estimates of

depreciation, interest cost, overhead, and profit. Don't be fooled by low monthly payments—it's the total cost you're concerned with. Recently a newspaper ran an ad listing a new 1984 Cadillac Coupe de Ville for \$299 a month; but how much does that car really cost? Well, there's a \$1500 non-refundable down payment, a \$500 security deposit, an annual \$55 fee for registration and inspection, and a \$40 monthly insurance charge. Also, there is a surcharge of 25 cents for every mile beyond the 1,000 allotted miles and a possible charge for excessive wear and tear. Considering all factors, including tax and if you drove 1,200 miles a month, your monthly payment would be over \$479—a difference of over \$180 a month or \$4320 over a 24-month lease!

It is also advisable to have your attorney carefully read over the lease (which incidentally is a complicated document) so that you don't unwittingly get into a bind or sign something other than that which was orally represented to you.

Contrary to what automobile leasing companies advertise, not all leasing fees are tax deductible. To correct an erroneous impression given in some newspaper advertisements, the Internal Revenue Service issued a Technical Information Release which stated in part:

"Federal income tax rules on this point are quite clear. Auto or truck lease payments are deductible only if they represent ordinary and necessary expense of, and are directly attributable to, the operation of a trade or business. Under no circumstances are such lease payments deductible to the extent they represent personal use by a taxpayer, such as for vacation trips or driving to and from his place of business or employment. And, no deduction will be allowed for so-called lease expenses which, in fact, constitute payments toward the purchase price of autos or trucks."

While all of the foregoing has related to automobiles, the logic and economic results will apply equally as well to the rental of light and heavy duty trucks. ●



AOE Returns to its Roots

In 1980 and 1981, the Amusement Operator's Expo (AOE) stunned the industry by staging an operator-oriented show in springtime in New Orleans. At the time, people said it could'n't be done. Since then, others tried to copy it. They couldn't. They found out there's only one AOE; and this year it's back in New Orleans, birthplace of Jazz, home of Mardi Gras!

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COINMAN INTERVIEW



Marty Cerin

By Valerie Cognevich

Marty Cerin, our Coinman of the Month started with a route in 1962 in Bakersfield, California. Nine years later he sold his route and went to Colorado and started working for Mountain Coin which was owned by Pete Garrett. He worked for Pete for about seven years, then left, only to return a year later when Elden Kingston bought the company. Marty's been working as general manager for the five divisions of Mountain Coin ever since. These divisions are located in DesMoine, Iowa; Salt Lake City, Utah; Phoenix, Arizona; Albuquerque, New Mexico; and Denver, Colorado (headquarters).

Married, he has four children, one of which, Tom, is in the coin-op industry in Santa Barbara, California. Like his father before him, Tom has a small route.

Marty says he's just like everyone else in this business: He got started in the business and somewhere along the line it got into his blood. Outspoken about the coin-op amusement industry's direction, he insists it's time to get together and work at pulling the industry out of its slump. Though he plans to retire at the end of this year, he insists he's not retiring because the industry is presently in the doldrums. In fact, he says, "It looks like it might be more of a challenge now. But I've spent ten years building up people in our organization, and the ownership is very important. I feel very secure in my retirement." Actually, the industry doldrums probably have a lot to do with what Marty will be doing in his first few years of retirement. That's right. He'll still be associated with Mountain Coin as a consultant. Like a true Coinman, his blood type is coin-op positive.

When you started in this business what was going on?

As a route operator, I was working with jukeboxes, cigarette machines, pinballs, and a few arcade pieces. That's it. Operating wasn't that difficult, but you had to worry about holding your locations and maintaining the right percentage. It's similar to problems operators are facing now. You know, history does have a way of repeating itself. A lot of things do come back but it is never on as large a scale. You remember the Hula Hoop? Well, we didn't foresee that videos were just a long fad. That was the problem, everyone got too heavy into video.

● *All this negative talk is just that—talk. Let me tell you something...Our sales have actually increased in recent months.* ●

Video a fad like Hula Hoop? What sort of effect does that have on your perception of the business?

The biggest change is we had to come off cloud nine. I don't know of any distributor who didn't take his lumps in receivables. Fortunately, I saw the end coming about six or seven months before it actually happened; so we weren't stuck with a lot of inventory. I looked at my receivables, didn't see how anyone could keep on like we were going. About that time, payments on contracts started falling a little behind; and, naturally that cut down our market for sales.

Did you see something there that others didn't?

I didn't do anything different, but others might not have looked at it in the same way I did. I know my first thought was they were just a little behind because they bought a new house or something. But when I started analyzing it, I saw no matter what our operators were doing, it wouldn't work. So we cut down on our sales. We had to return to the pre-boom era of distributing.

I guess we distributors got a little lazy, getting so many orders. We didn't have salesmen on the road, not that we wanted it that way, but we were forced into it.

So you think distributors are once again becoming counselors? Or are operators too independent now?

Operators got very independent, but now I see a trend where operators are starting to come back in to ask our advice about various games, the economics of the industry, things like that. Experienced operators have always realized distributors have a lot of knowledge, a lot of experience to share with their operator/customers. I see operators returning to that again.

What are you hearing from the operators? All doom and gloom?

I don't see that at all. Many of our operators are still in debt, but we're helping them in every way we can— maybe it's lengthening a contract, or dropping the interest, or even giving them a game here and there to rejuvenate their routes. But we're also finding operators who feel that even if they buy the newest games they are going to have a difficult time paying for them let alone paying off past debts. It may take a little time, but I feel by some of the things that are

happening that the industry will be strong again.

What are some of those things that are happening?

In time, things will get back to what they should be. The industry has gone through peaks and valleys before but nothing like the video boom/bust. So a lot of people didn't know what to do with it. But I see a light at the end of the tunnel. The industry is not going to go broke. We won't have the number of operators and locations that we had before. Manufacturers will just have to lower their sights and build what a reduced industry can use. But the industry will still be there. All this negative talk is just that—talk. Let me tell you something. It's the honest truth. Our sales have actually increased in recent months. We've really streamlined our organization. We never got into that trap of paying outrageous salaries and then having to lay off employees because they were making so much. We were very fortunate in having the excellent key people in our company and they never got spoiled. They remember when some people were making the high salaries. My people weren't but they have jobs now. We didn't have to lay off many people like some companies did.

Are the operators getting to a point of paying off the debts incurred since the video boom?

A lot of the operators who entered the industry during that time are out of business. It's the old time operators who are still solid, and that's because they didn't overbuy or get too heavily into debt. Also, there are a lot of locations with deplorable equipment, and those operators remain vulnerable to operators who can come in with new equipment.

What are operators buying right now?

Pinballs, jukeboxes, pool tables, but mainly they're looking at the cost of machines more than ever before. We've gone back to basics. With our pinball, jukebox, pool table, and shuffle alley sales all up, I think operators have realized video is not the answer. Of course, there are still locations that can handle only video games, so there'll always be a market for video. What I mean is video will always be around, but operators will buy only the top games. They'll wait longer before buying in order to get more conclusive test results. So that's got to be good for the operator. Before, he felt rushed to buy a game before it was

*I feel by some of the things that are happening
that the industry will be strong again.*

tested. Nowadays we get test reports from our manufacturers and our routes, and we can accurately predict how good the game is so we know what to order and how many.

But what about the relationship with the manufacturers you represent. Don't they want you to buy whatever they have to offer?

Our policy is to take one or two games and test them on our routes. How else will we know what will be a hit and what will sell? That will give us an idea about what to order. Games can do different in various parts of the country, too. So a manufacturer's test reports might not mean anything as to how that game will do in Colorado. That's why I feel we're fortunate to have a couple of routes to test the games.

That raises the old question about distributors who also operate. Is it a good business practice?

It's an advantage for us and our operator/customers if we have a route to test games. If we didn't have these routes, we would have to count on another operator to test the games. Let me add we're not in the route business by choice. We had to repossess some routes. In some cases, we may even have retained the operator as the route manager. The cash flow helps tremendously, sure, but at the same time, every one of our routes is for sale. We make a point of not competing with our customers. If one of their locations would call us, we would try to save that location for our customer.

As a distributor how do you assess the manufacturers' situation?

It's sad to see these manufacturers going out of business or cutting way down. I can't say anything about the management because they know way more than I do about manufacturing; but, at the same time, some did expand too rapidly.

The ones that are out of business just waited too long to pull back. You know yourself that, before the video boom, Mylstar (Gottlieb) was a very dependable manufacturer. They were manufacturing what they knew about, and the facilities were geared to their production. Then there were also some situations with lasers done with front money from distributors, and there aren't many that will get caught in that trap

again. I would hate to see us end up with one or two manufacturers. That would be bad.

We now have a situation with manufacturers who have a lot of their own distributorships. They have tons and tons of inventory, and they are trying to find just any way to get rid of that inventory. But these distributorships were just packed with inventory; so it's got to be a big loss to them.

What are your feelings on gray area games?

Whatever impact they have made on the industry, in due time it will come to a screaming halt. We don't operate them, and we don't sell them either. In fact, I don't see how they can last. I think the only reason people are getting by with them now are the states don't have the enforcement numbers to go after them. But, with these games it's the same thing as with the amusement games. When an operator down the street puts in a new game, then another operator's location finds out about the new game and wants one too. There will be situations where he will buy the game but will have a longer payoff on it.

What are your feelings on the video lottery?

It could be very detrimental to the industry if they legalize it. It would be bypassing the operator and therefore hurting the distributor. I have been following the Illinois test from time to time, and there is a possibility the problem may solve itself if tests are unsuccessful. Our state has a lottery, but no plans for a video lottery. Although the lottery people did try to put across to our state legislature that they wanted a video lottery. The legislature turned it down.

Do you think manufacturers will ever be able to bypass the distributors and sell direct to operators?

No way in the world they could. Number one, the logistics make it impossible. Most of our operators buy on contracts. It would be pretty tough for someone back in the credit department to be calling all over the United States. That would be the greatest deterrent. Some have tried, and in a way you can't blame them. They are there to make a dollar, and they had big investments in product, and, if the distributor turns him down, where else can he turn? But it doesn't work for them to sell direct. ●

*It's the old time operators who are still solid, and that's because
they didn't overbuy or get too heavily into debt.*

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(continued from page 39)

from Bally Midway was the appearance of a novel adult audience piece, *Tapper*, with the instantly recognizable musical jingle and graphic logo of Budweiser. Regardless of how this relationship was engineered, the fact that it came to be was a telling indication of the potential power coin-op can wield as a medium for other industries that share a common market and the desire to explore unconventional means to broaden their advertising message.

Konami/Centuri enjoyed continued success with *Track & Field* during the first half of the year as players didn't seem to tire of the physical interaction necessary to play the game. And, as a way to further reinforce that dedicated following of ardent videophiles, the Konami/Centuri tandem took center stage with the coin-op event of year—an international competition that attracted more than one million players in both the United States and Japan. In addition, the tournament combined the resources and facilities of Bally's Aladdin's Castles along with national convenience stores, providing the broad-based exposure and accessibility of the event on a scale never before achieved in the industry. Last, but by no means least, the proceedings dramatically showed the kind of enthusiasm and popularity attached to amusement games, when, in excess of \$100,000 was raised for the March of Dimes. It was the kind of activity that the industry could take pride from.

Cinematronics, along with Don Bluth, tried to rekindle the ebbing flame of laser disc games with a follow-up to *Dragon's Lair* called *Space Ace*, but the novelty of this type of entertainment had long passed and the response to this artful animation effort left little doubt that the first stage of the new technology had reached its end.

Within the same category, Data East hoped to find a market for a laser disc kit when it brought out *Cobra Command*, an animated action adventure that found some limited appeal.

Even Mylstar sought to salvage whatever audience existed with a

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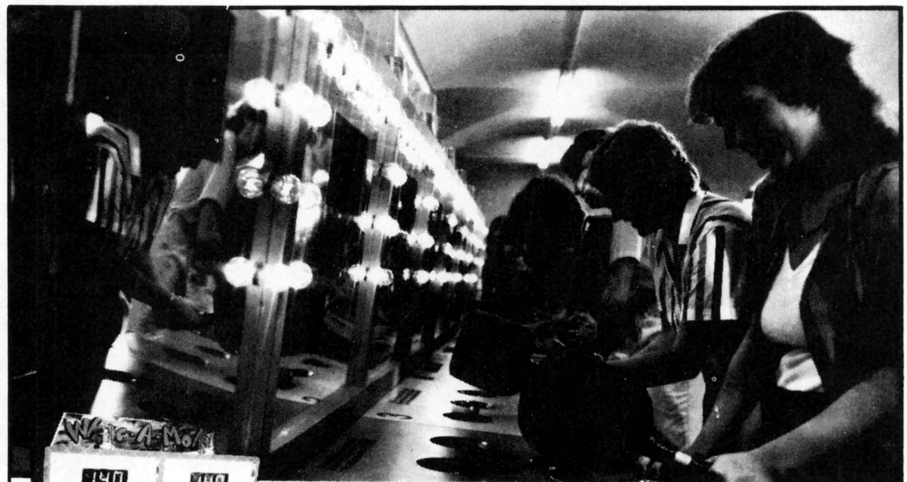


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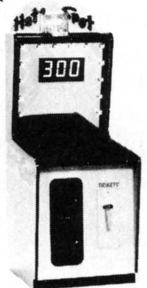
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clever live-action throwback to those 1950's sci-fi flicks with a game called *Us vs. Them*.

It was Nintendo, however, that took the diminishing market of 1984 by storm with the championship showing of *Punch Out!!* and the well received VS. System that was led off by *VS. Tennis* and followed by *VS. Baseball*. Undoubtedly noticing the attractiveness of sports-oriented games, the company attempted to deliver the non-stop action and physical involvement of a boxing game and did so with an inventive visual technique, a two monitor cabinet and superb use of speech. The results propelled Nintendo back into the ranks of the major manufacturers and then strengthened its position with a highly attractive and open-ended interchangeable game system featuring excellent graphics and realistic on-screen visuals.

Elsewhere the mood seemed to be one of catch-as-catch-can with companies scrambling to secure a portion of the market. Taito's *10-Yard Fight* managed to generate its fair share of interest, along with Data East's *Tag Team Wrestling*. But the real sleeper in the sports category had to be Coin-It's *Birdie King II* which found a growing niche for itself among the other, better known, performers.

It was conversions, however, which had a major influence on the design direction of the industry. Once universally scorned as a ridiculous concept that would never work, the improved quality of the products as well as economic conditions, changed many people's thinking. The attractions which marched out to locations everywhere as inexpensive alternatives to dedicated machines included the likes of Universal's continuing love affair with *Mr. Do!* in his new *Wild Ride* escapades. *Time Pilot '84* returned from Konami, updating the hit of little more than a year ago, while Crown Vending gave greater credibility to the small guy with a priced-right effort called *Superbike*.

Rounding out the video category line-up, we saw laser-based games, by and large, go nowhere. The major reason for this was the games were

inferior. This tended to doom the potential of the technology from the beginning and sour both operators and distributors against the viability of laser games for the present. It's unfortunate that none of the 14 different models that followed *Dragon's Lair* and *M.A.C.H. 3* could match them in earning power.

However, the real blame for the failure of laser games must fall directly on the manufacturers. All were too quick to turn out laser games, and the result was mediocre products that really didn't need laser circuitry to accomplish their feeble game play. Outside of *Space Ace*, the only shining lights were *Us vs. Them* and *Cobra Command*, which together brought the technology another small step closer to where it will ultimately go in the future.

Oh, yes, for those who have been quick and sure to report that laser is dead and buried, don't be surprised when it resurfaces in the next year or two as an extremely attractive coin-op option. It will never command the total sphere of the coin machine entertainment field, but it will be very important. All that's needed is a greater sensitivity and understanding of laser technology and how it can be applied to take full advantage of its vast potential. And it will come.

As for the other product lines, the venerable pinball came back to befuddle the skeptics who had relegated these steady performers to the trash heap. Fortunately, the few remaining manufacturers who still believed in flipper games didn't get side-tracked and scared away from supporting a good thing that might just last for another generation, or two, or three of players.

Although the number of models released during the first nine months of the year were few and far between, the market seemed more than willing to buy up what was available. If anything, what this should signal is a more fertile target market to deal with and, as a result, even more models, on a more regular, and frequent basis in the months ahead.

Regarding 1984, we saw a pronounced reliance on design that either brought back golden-oldies

such as Williams' *Laser Cue*, which bore a striking resemblance to *Alien Poker* (if you took away a small top flipper and target bank), or Mylstar's final tribute to *El Dorado*. Basic, uncomplicated playfields made up the rest of the selections led by Bally's *Kings of Steel*, Game Plan's *Attila the Hun* and Mylstar's *The Games*.

Although this emphasis on straightforward, no-frills design might have been enough for 1984 and the feeding of the slowly awakening revival for flipper games, there will definitely have to be more imagination and innovation in the future to sustain any real growth.

Apart from the positive response to novelty games, which are finding a place in more and more operations, the last real issue of the year, has to deal with the manufacturers themselves. Obviously, there has been a lot of shuffling around and a tally sheet that is heavier on the losers' side than it is winners'.

Maybe the biggest shock of 1984 was the late fall announcement ending Mylstar (nee Gottlieb). It had been a major part of the industry for over five decades. Any last minute changes in this fate remain unknown as of this writing, but the repercussions for the rest of the industry have got to be substantial as to how the outside world will now view the shrinking business.

Stern's reorganization status cast doubt over whether this company can right itself and become a viable candidate in the manufacturing wars. And the turmoil at Warner Communications has only meant a shaky outlook for Atari and grave doubts about where this company might land in the next three to six months.

Add to this some questions and concerns regarding the future of Williams, which really hasn't rebounded since its devastating entanglement with Bally almost a year ago; and Taito, which has effectively returned to developing product for any other interested parties. Centuri, meanwhile, with the help of Konami, has remained an active participant in the coin-op wars, but a less than favorable outpouring of

orders for *Hyper Sports*, the exceptional follow-up to *Track & Field*, must have come as a shock to this duo, and rumors are that the game may well resurface as a kit this fall.

Nintendo, on the other hand, has got to be considered a force to reckon with, based on the show of strength this spring, and Exidy always seems to come up with something to keep in the race, as does Data East, which is enjoying some exciting sales for its inventive *Karate Champ*.

Rounding out an evaluation of 1984, one must spend some extra space for Bally with its Midway/Sega/Sente links and the growing suspicion that if things continue the way they have the past nine months this powerhouse giant could be all alone as the last major. Interestingly, any move in this direction won't be based on the overpowering acceptance of its product, because, if anything, there has been much anticipation but no real breakthroughs—or as they say in the advertising game, much sizzle but no steak. However, a recent extravaganza to kick off the Sente portion of Bally and the SAC I and II systems, might be enough to generate some temporary excitement and enthusiasm on the distributor and operator level, although I'll hold out my observations until the players get a chance to cast their votes.

So far I'm underwhelmed by what has already taken place, but eternally optimistic to believe that things will turn around and begin to build upward and onward as they have always seemed to do in the past. Those in the outside world who are more than ready, willing, and receptive to the idea that coin-op is dead, are going to be in for a surprise.

As long as there is a leisure time entertainment category and people willing to spend a portion of their hours at play and diversion, we will survive. As long as people will pump money into some type of equipment or creation that vends escape, fantasy, a challenge, and enjoyment, there will be a business to fulfill this need. And that business is called the world of coin-op amusement games; pure and simple. ●

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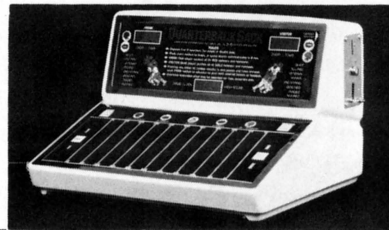
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Cigarette Vending, Minors, and the Role of NAMA

A small but very bright and visible decal on most of the nation's 785,000 cigarette vending machines warns that "Sales of Cigarettes to Minors are Forbidden by Law. We support this law. Help prevent and report violations to us. The Management."

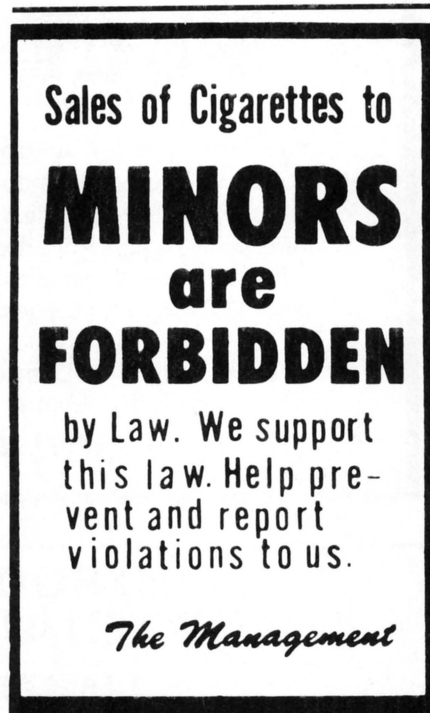
Because this warning sign to minors has been a fixture on most cigarette venders for more than 20 years, most vending industry people take it for granted and few remember how and why it got there.

The long-standing role of the nation's vending industry association in all aspects of cigarette vending machines sometimes is also taken for granted, even though it has been—and continues to be—of vital importance to those who manufacture and operate cigarette machines and to the tobacco industry.

The National Automatic Merchandising Association (NAMA), which designed and distributes the "Minors are Forbidden" decal, has been supporting and defending all aspects of cigarette vending since the day NAMA was founded in 1936.

Says Richard W. Funk, NAMA counsel and director of government affairs, "NAMA was founded almost 50 years ago for the primary purpose of preventing discriminatory legislation and unfair taxation. Although we have added other services over the years, the initial purpose of legislative and regulatory protection remains by far the most important mission of NAMA."

Today NAMA has a staff of five attorneys in its three offices whose task is to monitor legislation and organize support or opposition at



The NAMA decal served to insulate vending from the growing health and smoking debate.

the state and local level, and to function with federal authorities in order to protect and advance the fortunes of the vending industry.

Funk says that to this very day cigarette vending gets a large share of the staff's attention and of the association's financial resources.

The minors warning decal on cigarette vending machines is a visible example of how much NAMA has concentrated on the issues which affect cigarette vending.

Before the U.S. Surgeon General's Report first brought the smoking and health issue to the forefront in 1962, the NAMA staff had carefully monitored the research of the Royal College of Physicians in

England and correctly anticipated that the U.S. Government might pursue the same issue with even greater zeal.

"By the time the fat got into the fire, so-to-speak, we had formed a special cigarette vending committee, hired outside public relations counsel, and determined that smoking by minors might become the immediate target of anti-smoking forces," said Funk.

When the U.S. Surgeon General's Report hit the news media in 1962, NAMA had already prepared industrywide defenses in the form of "Operation Alert", a six-point program of self-regulation regarding the placement of cigarette machines. Part of Operation Alert was aimed at educating legislators and the general public that minors do not buy cigarettes from vending machines to any extent which need concern the public.

Before the U.S. Report was issued NAMA had underwritten a landmark consumer study which identified why minors smoke, where they buy cigarettes and how parents' smoking habits and peer pressure influence their own smoking behavior.

The research study, undertaken by the then highly regarded Gilbert Youth Research Organization, coupled with the NAMA self-regulation program for the placement of cigarette vending machines, put the entire cigarette vending business in a public position where activists seldom attacked vending machines as a source of cigarettes for minors. It served to insulate vending from the growing health and smoking debate.

In the few communities where

bans on cigarette machines have been proposed NAMA's effective self-regulation program has reassured city councilmen that vending machine bans are not necessary, and all have been defeated.

Until the early 1980's, NAMA had distributed more than two million of the "Minors are Forbidden" decals free of charge to cigarette machine manufacturers and to all cigarette operators whether they are members or not.

"That little decal is an eloquent symbol of NAMA's preventative action which has been a tremendous benefit to everyone who has an interest in cigarette vending," Funk says.

The decals are available from NAMA to this very day and are used on virtually all machines.

While safeguarding the industry against the "sales to minors" issue has been a unique accomplishment

some vending operators, is featured regularly on the programs of the association's two annual conventions and on the annual meeting presentations of its more than 30 state associations, says Funk.

In recent years NAMA has zeroed in on various states' attempts to levy a sales tax on the state excise tax portions of cigarette retail prices.

Tobacco companies and cigarette machine manufacturers occupy a prominent place in the two trade shows conducted by NAMA each year, thus facilitating communication and interaction between operators and manufacturers.

In addition, the association continues to assign a significant portion of its annual Operating Ratio Report to cigarette vending and to the concerns of cigarette machine operators.

"We have every reason to

We are not qualified to act as health experts. But we have every reason to use our expertise in government and legislative affairs to prevent discriminatory regulations and taxes which would threaten vending operators as a fallout from the health debate.

for cigarette vending by NAMA, the association renders many other services to cigarette vending and to the entire industry, says Funk.

NAMA continues to invest considerable staff time and funds in monitoring all legislative proposals at the state and local level. It reports all bills and regulations of interest to its members and to its network of state associations on a frequent basis.

More importantly, NAMA has always mobilized its members and the state groups to oppose higher cigarette taxes and the now multiplying anti-smoking ordinances.

The NAMA staff serves on the boards and committees of several tobacco industry associations and actively supports the Tobacco Action Network (TAN) through its members in all parts of the country.


Cigarette vending, even though it is no longer the main interest of

continue this emphasis on cigarette vending since even today 20 percent of the \$15 billion sales volume of the vending industry is represented by cigarette sales," Funk says.

"We recognized more than 20 years ago that the smoking-health issue would not diminish as a subject for public debate, but we determined from the beginning that NAMA's function is to concentrate on its members' role as retailers and distributors. We are not qualified to act as health experts. But we have every reason to use our expertise in government and legislative affairs to prevent discriminatory regulations and taxes which would threaten vending operators as a fallout from the health debate," said Funk.

"In that role we have become and remain the major resource of operators and manufacturers of cigarette machines and tobacco products." •

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TAX TIPS

By Richard Weatherington

IRS Dirty Tricks Aimed at Operators Who Sell

The old warning to "beware of Greek's bearing gifts" is very true if you happen to be a Trojan or own a coin vending business. In particular, beware if you are approached by a prospective buyer for your operation who has a keen interest in finding a company which can provide a lot of under-the-table income that can be hidden from the IRS.

The prospective buyer may just turn out to be part of an undercover project known as the "Business Opportunities Program" (BOP).

The program is one of several undercover operations the IRS works in order to trap business tax evaders. The IRS may approach an arcade owner, posing as a prospective buyer for the company and use the information it obtains to turn a prospective sale into a legal and financial nightmare.

An owner recently ended a seven-year fight with the IRS after being stung by the tactics of the BOP. The resulting publicity and comments by the courts about the way the IRS runs the Business Opportunity Program left it stinging, but still determined to continue undercover sting operations.

In 1977 the IRS decided to use the program to ferret out what it was sure were some tax cheaters in Arizona who were skimming money off the top of their companies. IRS agents posed as buyers looking to acquire a good business. The ruse came complete with business cards, three-piece suits and business partners.

They contacted a business broker and asked if he had any firms which were for sale. Although the agents did not specifically ask for a

business which did a lot of skimming, the veiled suggestions and hand gestures made it very clear what the buyers were seeking. They wanted firms which had enough cash flow to allow them to skim income off the top without reporting it on their tax return.

The IRS will not restrict or curtail its use of the Business Opportunity Program to catch coin vending dealers who skim money from their businesses.

The broker said he knew of a firm which might fit their purposes. After talking to the company owners, the broker met with the phoney buyers and asked them to sign an agreement of confidentiality, which required that they not divulge any of the information they learned.

One of the agents examined the company tax returns and met with the owner and his wife. While the agent and the owner were away from the broker for a moment, he raised the subject of skimming, though again only in somewhat vague terms. Things seemed to click between the agent and the owner,

and the agent was sure he had a good prospect for the trap.

A few days later the broker called the agents and asked "Are you sure you aren't from the IRS?" The agent just laughed, but he said nothing, as though it was a silly question. He then asked for another meeting with the owners.

The meeting took place at the owner's home where the business records were reviewed. Next, the other agent, acting as a business partner, was brought in. While the first agent would act eager to buy, the partner acted reluctant, taking a "show me" attitude.

The agents toured the company and insisted that the broker not be present at this part of the discussion. When the discussion again turned to money, the agents pointed out that they only wanted a company that could generate substantial skimming of income.

The agents made a return visit to the owner's home and were given a tour of the house because one of the agents indicated that he might know of someone looking for a home just like the owner's. They again examined the company books and were shown a summary of the amount the owner had skimmed from the business over the years.

The agent who played the role of the "doubting Thomas" asked to see more proof than just the summary. He was then taken to the owner's bedroom and shown the invoice that had not been reported as income.

Later, when the agents returned to their office, they diagrammed the home in order to obtain a search warrant. A few days later, armed with the search warrant and the dia-

gram of the house, special agents from the IRS arrived at the owner's home, posing as real estate agents. When they followed the wife, who was the only one at home into the kitchen, they flashed their badges and showed her the warrant. The warrant listed five specific items to be seized and the agents were told where those items were located.

She was read her legal rights, but declined an opportunity to call her husband or an attorney. She gave permission to the search of the home and storage buildings but indicated the records had been moved to another location. She signed a consent form to allow a search of that location.

The agents left the residence with 17 boxes of material with only a cursory inspection of what was being taken. The agent in charge later admitted many items were improperly seized.

Later that afternoon the husband phoned the IRS and demanded the records be returned which were needed for the operation of the business. Three days later the IRS did return an adding machine and a blank checkbook.

The owner went to court to obtain a restraining order to prevent the IRS from using the evidence seized and requiring the items be returned. They argued that the search was illegal because the deceptive actions of the IRS had tainted the warrant. They also argued that the wife had given involuntary consent to the search of the other location.

The district court noted that the IRS used the Business Opportunities Program under the guise of being prospective buyers in order to appeal to the seller's natural inclination to reveal skimming and thereby improve the chances of a sale. Whether a search is reasonable depends on the circumstances surrounding the undercover operation. The court found that the agents had not been honest when asked if they were with the IRS, particularly in light of the fact that the IRS had approached the investigation as a criminal matter from the start.

In a prior case, the Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals ruled that a con-

sent search is unreasonable under the Fourth Amendment if the consent was induced by deceit, trickery or misrepresentation by the IRS.

The district court concluded that the agents' failure to advise the owner of the criminal nature of the investigation was a flagrant disregard for the owner's rights. Even one of the agents admitted questioning how far they are permitted to go before giving a person his Miranda warning, particularly when the investigation is conducted under the guise of something else.

The district court decided that the searches were illegal and that the consent given by the wife was obtained in the course of an illegal search and the IRS could not use the evidence it had seized.

Since the future of the Business Opportunity undercover program was at stake, the IRS appealed the district court's ruling to the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals. That court, with some obvious regret, overturned the lower court's ruling. The Appeals Court concluded that the first and second visits to the home of the company owner were not illegal searches and the owner had given up his right to privacy because he did not vigorously preserve his privacy when he gave the agents the information on skimming.

The court held that the Fourth Amendment affords no protection to a wrongdoer who holds the misplaced belief that a person to whom he voluntarily confides his wrongdoing will not reveal it.

In a rather stinging indictment against the IRS, however, the court said its ruling should not be misconstrued as approval of the tactics used by the IRS agents. The IRS had violated its own policy guidelines in conducting the Business Opportunities operations, and the entire program was ultimately destructive in nature.

Democratic governments, the court noted, are based on a relationship of trust between the government and the business owner. If the possibility exists that the next acquaintance you meet may be a government agent conducting a hidden investigation, unjustified by any indication of wrongdoing, every

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The prospective buyer may just turn out to be part of an undercover IRS project known as the "Business Opportunities Program."

relationship will be tainted by fear and suspicion.

According to a recent report, the IRS will restrict in the future other programs where agents pose as priests, doctors, and even journalists, but it will not restrict or curtail its use of the Business Opportunity Program to catch coin vending dealers who skim money from their businesses.

Now that you understand some of the lengths the IRS will go to under the business Opportunities Program, you need to be cautious when approached by a buyer, particularly if the discussion turns to

illegal activities.

While it is not clear how the court would have ruled if the IRS agent had lied instead of only laughed when asked if he was with the IRS, it probably would have been a factor of considerable weight.

If prospective buyers seem interested in steering the discussions toward sensitive areas, ask point blank if they are with the IRS or any other government agency and accept only a clear yes or no and get the denial in writing.

As the court indicated in this case, if you want to claim the privacy protections under the Fourth

Amendment, you must clearly indicate by your actions that you intend to protect your rights. Operators are their own worst enemies when it comes to sticking their foot in their mouth.

What you do with your tax return is no one else's concern. If you choose to broadcast indiscretions to another person then you give up your right to privacy and may end up in hot water as well. The first rule of taxation: Keep your mouth shut. Violate that rule, and there are not many protections left to help you when the IRS walks through the door. •

TAX UPDATE

Tax consequences of computerizing

Computers should not be acquired for tax reasons. Nevertheless, they can deliver a worthwhile tax punch.

The hardware is tangible personal property eligible for what the Economic Recovery Tax Act of 1981 defines as "cost recovery" (depreciation to us old-timers). This hardware falls into the five-year recovery class, which means you recover or deduct its cost over five years.

The first year's recovery is 15 percent of the cost; the second year is 22 percent, and for the next three years it's 21 percent. The investment tax credit is 10 percent.

Like all other property that is entitled to both cost recovery and the investment tax credit, you must make a choice—reduce your investment tax credit by two percent (from ten percent to eight percent) or reduce the cost of your hardware by one-half of the amount of your investment tax credit for the purpose of cost recovery. For example, if your ten percent investment tax credit is \$5,000, you would reduce

the cost of your hardware by \$2,500.

As for software, if it's included in the price of the hardware, it can be amortized over five years or its useful life, if shorter. Otherwise, it's depreciated as part of the computer.

As for the investment tax credit, if the software is included in the price of the computer, it becomes eligible as tangible personal property. If not, the IRS views it as intangible property.

The only tax benefits for leased software are current-rental-expense deductions.

With custom software, the question is whether to expense or capitalize. The answer depends on your own situation, but you must apply the same treatment to all your software. You cannot switch methods between taxable years without IRS consent. If you capitalize, the amortization period is the shorter of five years or useful life. Currently the IRS says no investment tax credit.

Vehicle depreciation

The new ACRS (Accelerated Cost Recovery System) allows you to

depreciate personal property over a five-year period no matter how long the property might last. Cars and light trucks can be written off over three years under ACRS.

Is the five-year write-off such a good deal? Not always.

Here's the problem: You buy a heavy truck for \$20,000 that is five-year property under ACRS. This truck won't last five years. Your best estimate is that the truck will last for about 200,000 miles (or about three years based on estimated use).

Are you stuck with a five-year life? No. You can elect out of ACRS and depreciate the truck at the rate of ten cents per mile (the \$20,000 cost divided by 200,000—the estimated miles the truck will last). For example, if the truck is driven for 80,000 miles in the first year, the depreciation for that year would be \$8,000 (10 cents × 80,000 miles).

Your right to use this mileage method is in the Internal Revenue Code. Tell your accountant to see Section 168 (e) (2) (B). •

—By Irving L. Blackman
Blackman, Kallick & Co., Ltd.
180 N. LaSalle St., Chicago, IL 60601

FRANK'S CRANKS

By
Frank "The Crank"
Seninsky



Atari returns with 'Return of the Jedi'

It's been quite a while since I reviewed a new game, and even longer since I reviewed an Atari game. The truth is that I needed a new game to take to a show and *Return of the Jedi* had just hit the East Coast. I took this game because I really wanted to see what type game Atari is now making. There were many rumors that the California manufacturer was departing from the coin-op industry. Well, they are still here, and we're all very happy.

Return of the Jedi is a one-player, skill-type, shoot 'em up space theme game. It has many similarities to Atari's *Star Wars*. For two days the kids played (it was set on free play), and most said it was a good game. I am not offering my opinion here; I'll wait and see how it does for a few weeks before judging it.

There is a feature called "split wave" that really makes this game different. This game feature allows the action to go back and forth

between two different scenes that are happening at the same time (just like in the movie). It occurs during the second and third waves.

In general, aside from the handle and steering assemblies (shown in Figure 1 and 2), the design is like other Atari games of the past. The Regulator/Audio II PCB, on the left side of the cabinet wall, looking from the back, is nothing new. The game PCB is mounted on the right side. A standard Atari power supply is mounted on the bottom of the cabinet body which itself is mounted to a pedestal base. There are six fuses on the supply, one of which is F3, a 20-amp slo-blo. On past Atari games, I recommended upgrading this fuse to a 25-amp slo-blo if it should blow for no apparent reason, like on *Pole Position*. I've only tested the game for two days and F3 was running slightly hot, but it doesn't look like it's ready to go. Keep the 20-amp fuse in until further testing.

Another feature we will like is the automatic (well almost) calibration of the flight controls. These adjustments are made by moving the controls to their extreme left, right, up, and down positions and holding them there for a few seconds each. Repeating this four position cycle a few times is recommended. The manual says these adjustments are also being calibrated during normal game play, but

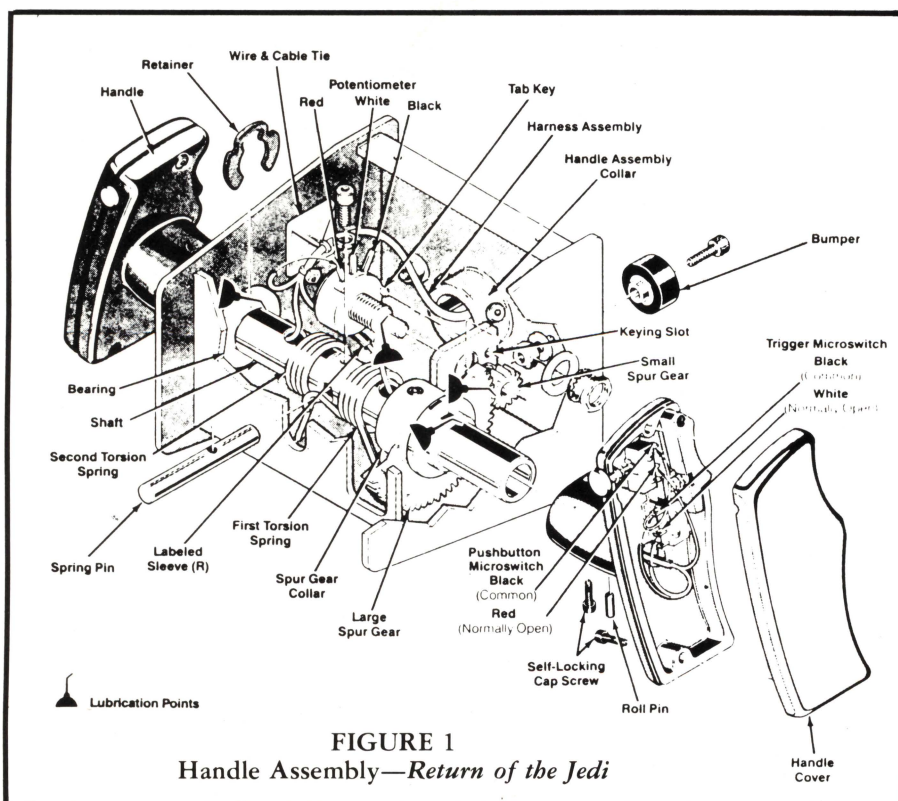


FIGURE 1
Handle Assembly—*Return of the Jedi*

don't leave this to chance. During each game the player will hold each extreme position for several seconds.

There is also a section in the manual that gives four hints on how to play the game. These strategies should be posted on the game or nearby, and it's an excellent idea to help get players interested in the game. I believe part of the reason many past video players aren't playing the new games is they feel it isn't worth the large number of quarters it takes just to learn a game. Posting game playing hints sounds like a good way to increase play.

"Self-Test"—There are seven self-test displays built into *Jedi*.

1. The RAM and ROM tests cover the major RAMS and ROMS and require little explanation.

2. Statistics include total games, total game time, and average game time. This last category, average game time, is very important and should be watched carefully. It ties into game options.

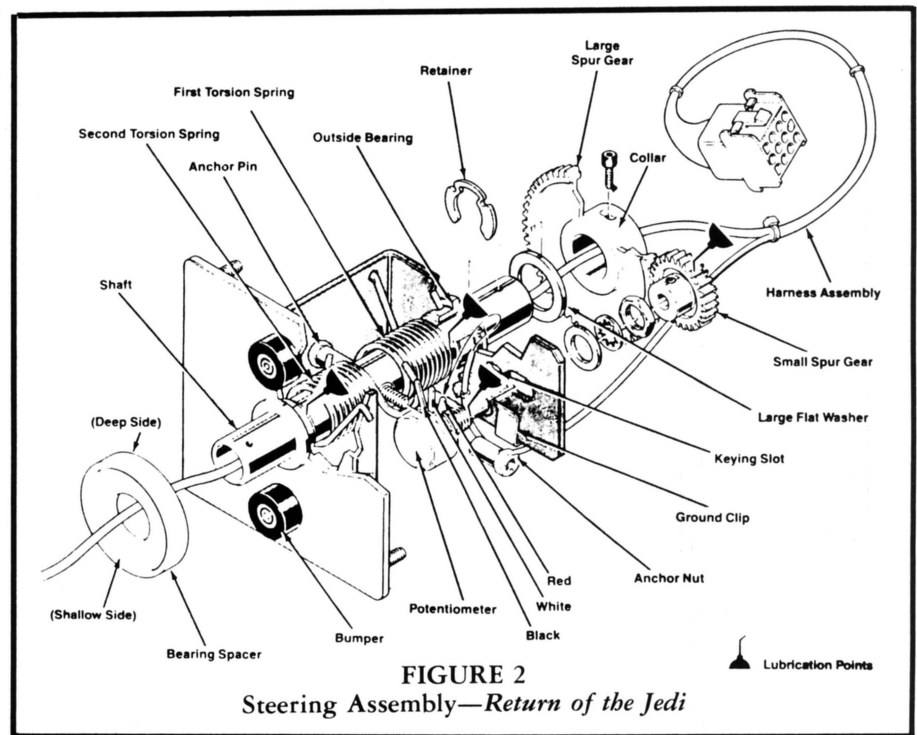
3. Game Options—*Jedi* came factory set at 50 cents, five lives, medium difficulty, and 30,000 bonus. These settings look good for arcade play but should be changed for street or bar locations to 1 coin/play, three lives, medium difficulty, and also starting at 30,000 bonus.

4. Sound Processor Test—The system has 65 available sounds, but all are not used. This test checks all those that are used.

5. Control Test—Checks all the switches and the flight control ranges (vertical and horizontal potentiometers).

6. Monitor Color Bar Test—This shows four horizontal bars, each with eight shades. Each row gets darker as you go from left to right. The ninth column reads black, white, black, white to show the contrast easier. It's very easy to adjust the colors using this feature.

7. Grid Pattern—This checks size, centering, linearity, and con-



vergence.

"Flight Controls"—The controls are the only part of the game that demand special attention. Several sections require lubrication and tightening. Lubricate (every two months at least) the outside of the four large torsion springs, the teeth of the small and large spur gears, and the ends of the potentiometer shafts where the rubbing occurs. To get inside the Handle Assembly, four special 3/32" hex-key screws must be removed. A special tool is supplied with each game (hopefully).

The handles must be checked on a weekly basis. After two days the four 7/64" Allen screws loosened up substantially. Use lock-tite to keep these screws secure. When removing the handle covers to check the pushbutton microswitch and the trigger micro, be extra careful that the trigger springs don't fly off. This happens to me often when I'm disassembling units for the first time. A good practice is to wrap the handle with a rag as you remove the handle caps. Any flying springs and components will be caught in the rag!

While the cover is off, check that

the vertical and horizontal pots' set screws are tight. Aligning these pots is a very delicate operation. The manual, however, takes you step by step, and it's really not that hard to do.

"Monitor"—Atari has used a Disco 19" color raster monitor. There is nothing to warn you about here except to note that it is very time consuming to remove the monitor from the front of the cabinet. The front display shield and the bezel must first be removed. This is common practice with Atari games.

One last item to note. The cabinet style is different and attractive (it does have the modern look), but with the pedestal base, weighs more than your average video. It is somewhat difficult to move but does fit easily through a standard doorway.

I'll keep you up to date on service calls as they come in. Please send in some service tips of your own. The last one I received was almost three months ago. Just drop a line to me at Alpha-Omega Amusements & Sales, 6 Sutton Place, Edison, NJ 08817. Telephone: 201/287-4990.

And as always...keep cranking! •

Players aren't playing the new games because they feel it isn't worth the large number of quarters it takes just to learn it.

Golden 89 phono

The new 200-selection phonograph from Rowe (Golden 89) features attractive high tech styling and a full-range stereo sound.

Inside the large lower grille is Rowe's new dual channel three-way speaker system that produces a sound quality that the manufacturer claims exceeds many high-grade home component systems.

The new selector keyboard and the new easy-to-read price card are back lit and two rhythmically pulsating bar graphs keep the action going.

Other new features of the Golden 89 are its four separate digital displays that show exactly what's happening and when. A newly redesigned central micro-computer gives the operator more control than in the past and is video-ready

A dazzling new lighting design; a relocated selector, coin inlet, bill acceptor, and price card to the far right side of the phono; and a raised title rack for easier viewing are also new features in this Rowe phono.

As on other Rowe phonos, the OBA bill acceptor is standard. It accepts both \$1 and \$5 bills and has been proven to increase collections measurably by encouraging overplay and special offers.

All-front accessibility, LED readouts, trouble-shooting charts, and modular components simplify service and maintenance. Rowe's unique five-year warranty covers all moving parts and a two-year warranty covers electronics.



Vend-a-sticker

Movie Hut, Inc. recently unveiled its *Vend-A-Sticker* machine.

Available with a floor stand or as a counter model, *Vend-A-Sticker's* four-column format allows for a variety of selections. A large coin box, capable of holding \$400 of quarters, and its all mechanical design assure years of trouble-free operation. No electricity is needed.

Varying the sticker assortment to fit the location, company officials say, should increase the machine's marketability. However, the key to profit in this ballooning market is the sticker itself, according to MHI President, Jack Clair. "Having a reliable, serviceable machine is important, but the stickers inside are what brings kids back." MHI offers a large assortment of the highest quality die-cut stickers available, including 30 of the most popular stickers in the country.

"With kids collecting and trading stickers more and more, die-cutting adds a special value to our stickers," says Jim Pramenko, MHI vice president of marketing. "The result is a sticker of equal or better quality than those found in stores at a better price. . . a collector's dream."

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Padlocks

Tough, strong, solid hardened steel security is available in a full line of solid steel padlocks manufactured by the American Lock Company in Crete, Illinois. Solid steel padlocks feature all purpose security for gates, doors, trucks, lockers, toolboxes, vending machines, and warehouses.

Solid hardened steel cases of American Lock provide protection since ordinary hand tools such as saws, hammers, and chisels are useless against a solid hardened steel case, company officials said.

And, American Lock's line of solid steel padlocks use a hardened steel ball locking system that resists forcing and locks the shackle solid—a locking system which has become the standard of the National Crime Prevention Institute.

American Lock Solid Steel Padlocks are available with five- and six-pin tumblers, tubular seven-pin cylinders, or 10-blade tumblers in a variety of shackle sizes and lengths.

The Series 5000 and 700 Solid Steel Padlocks with their hardened steel cover plates also feature unlimited key changes including master and grand master keying. The 747, the tubular cylinder HT-15 and T-900 padlocks, and the patented Series 2000 "Shackleless" lock supply versatility and extra security.

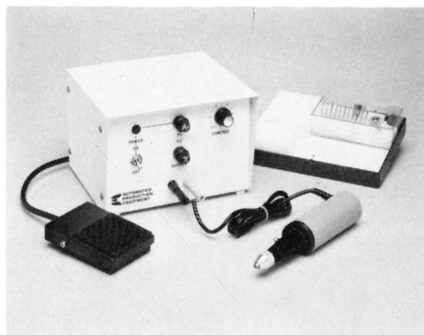
For more information, contact

American Lock Company, 3400 West Exchange Road, Crete, IL 60417. Telephone: 312/534-2000.

Billiard cloth

Grote & Hubbell, distributor of billiard accessories since 1846, now carries 22 rubberbacked cloth colors in stock for immediate shipment. Cloth is available by the yard or cut to size.

For additional information, contact Grote & Hubbell, P.O. Box 27085, Cincinnati, OH 45227. Telephone: 1-800/543-0880.



Drilling system

APE Corporation introduces a new version of its Model SRS 008 Circuit Board Drilling System. Features include a foot pedal operated power source and variable speed control for the hand held motor (0-20,000 rpms). The system comes complete with heavy duty hand held motor and with versatile chuck, which accommodates tooling up to 9/64".

Completing the system is an assortment of drills, bits, burrs, and abrasives to accommodate all circuit board repair requirements. The complete system price is \$325.

For more information, contact Automated Products Equipment Corporation, 142 Peconic Ave., Medford, NY 11763. Telephone: 516/654-1197.

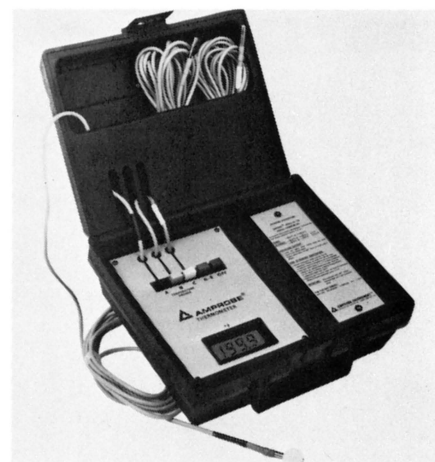
Digital thermometer

A new, quick-response digital thermometer for industrial applications has been introduced by Amprobe Instrument.

The Model DT-156 thermometer has a range of -50.0°F to $+199.9^{\circ}\text{F}$ with an accuracy of $\pm 1^{\circ}\text{F}$ between -30.0°F and $+199.9^{\circ}\text{F}$. It features solid-state design and three individual probes with quick-response sensing elements. Each probe has a 12-foot color-coded lead permitting the checking of temperatures at points up to 24 feet apart.

A color-coded push-button selector switch provides for quick and easy selection of the temperature to be checked. An A-B switch gives an instantaneous digital reading of the difference between the temperatures being measured by the "A" probe and the "B" probe. This feature is designed for air conditioning and refrigeration superheat measurements and for other temperature differential measurements such as indoor/outdoor and inlet/outlet temperatures.

For more information, contact Amprobe Instrument, 630 Merrick Rd., P.O. Box 329, Lynbrook, NY 11563. Telephone: 516/Lynbrook 3-5600.



Aids to the Trade

Coin-A-Ticket incentive program

Coin-A-Ticket, Inc. of Columbus, Ohio has introduced a new catalog incentive program which provides all coin-operated devices, even coin-changers with value added bonuses for each and every use.

"Like stamps and coupons before them, tickets are fast becoming the extra value bonus that gets consumers coming back for more," said David Glimcher, vice president for the company.

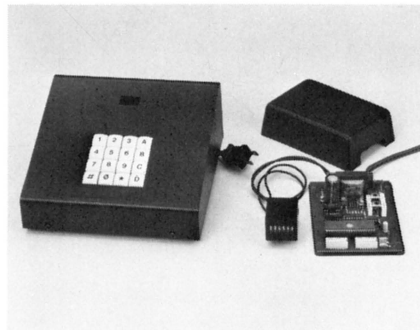
"The response has been phenomenal," Glimcher said. "Our customers report a 200-300 percent increase in cash flow and their customers are happier than ever to be getting real value for the coins."

Through the Coin-A-Ticket catalog program, a variety of items suddenly become potential possessions with every coin dropped in a slot. Each ticket the machine cranks out adds to the excitement. A full color "Winners Wish Book" provides players with a world of prizes from video cassette recorders and varispeed drills to sailboats and fur coats.

"This makes our program complete and unique," Glimcher continued. "New microprocessing capacity adds literally dozens of ways for each owner to increase his coin-op business. Anything that takes a coin can now give out a ticket. And tickets add up to real prizes: videos, stereos, sporting goods, things for everyone.

"If you've ever seen kids with a 'wish book' around Christmas time, you can understand the power the fabulous prizes inside our catalog have to motivate people to play," he said. "Now, playing a video game, or changing a bill can be a way to make wishes come true."

Complete information about the Coin-A-Ticket Catalog Incentive Program is available by writing Coin-A-Ticket, 2763 East 4th Avenue, Columbus, OH 43219 or calling 614/252-8878 between 9 and 5 on weekdays.



The Wireless

The Wireless from Digital Controls allows individualized pricing on any number or type of coin-op games. Now operators can price games according to their earnings performances and give new life to an old game by setting it for more plays per \$1 than the top games they keep at full price.

The Wireless is designed to let operators price games individually and instantly, and eliminate the hassles of making changes or counting tokens. Operators plug The Wireless into any wall socket to control the credit functions on up to 16 games.

The Wireless telephone-type key pad is banked by A-B-C-D lettered keys allowing the user to add anywhere from one to 99 plays on a game.

Alert games by using the telephone key pad, then press lettered key "A" or "B" to cause a present number of games to be credited.

The "C" function causes the number of plays set at The Wireless receiver to be automatically credited.

"D" function allows you to go to the telephone key pad to enter any number of plays you want credited

to a game, from one to 99.

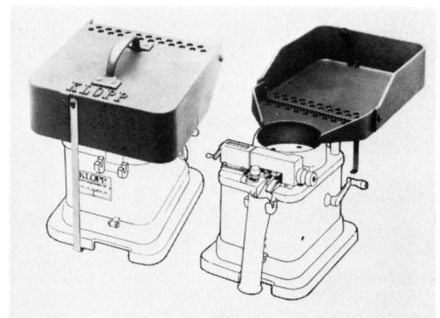
The Wireless rests in "watch-dog" mode, overseeing an extensive theft-proof security system. No other transmitter can activate credits. The Wireless security system is backed by a noisy alarm.

The Wireless also features a second set of contacts which allow for alternative controls, such as special lights, buzzers, etc.

Klopp Top

Klopp International, Inc. announces the availability of its current production model Klopp Top as a replacement part for all Klopp counters manufactured prior to 1982.

The new top is larger and more rugged than earlier models. Made of cast aluminum, it features three rows of clean-out holes and provides greater protection for counter controls when it is in the closed position. The company claims the new Klopp Top can be used to replace older sheet metal tops on portable counters or to replace older stationary tops thus converting desk model Klopps to portable use. The new top comes complete with locking arm and top installs with two bolts and will fit Klopps up to 12 years old. It increases over-all machine weight by less than a pound. Available through Klopp distributors or directly from the factory.



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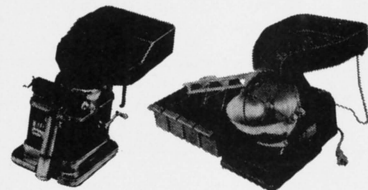
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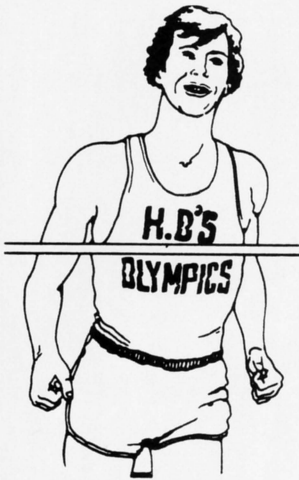
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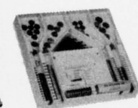
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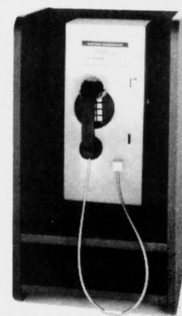


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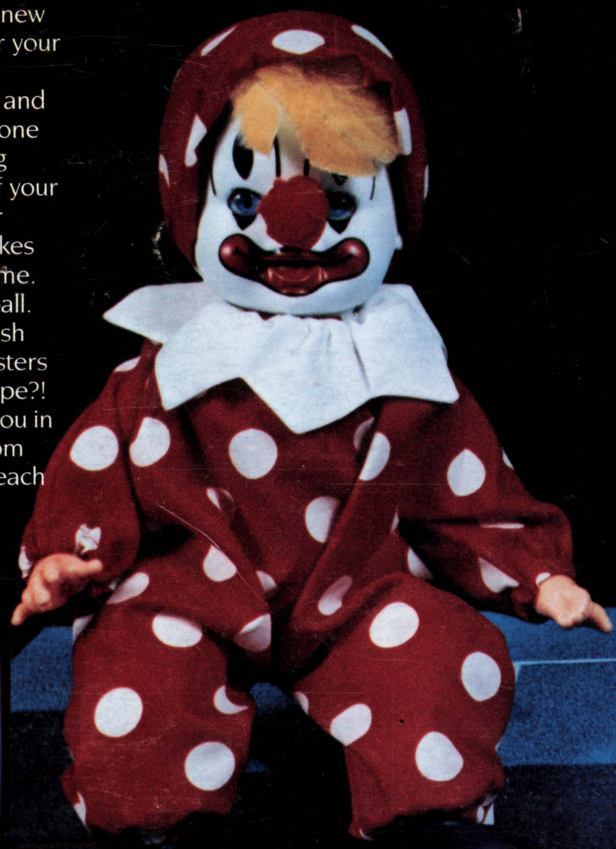
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